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GANSEVOORT - LANSING
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HELPS

Over Hard Places.

STORIES FOR GIRLS.

BY LYNDE PALMER. *pseud*

Mary Louise (Palmer) Peebles



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

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INTRODUCTION.

To my Dear Young Friends,

The Girls.

DEAR little sisters, (for I hope we all belong to one family, with God for our Father and the Saviour for our dear Elder Brother,) I have something to say to you to-day.

Perhaps some of you have lately read a book of your brother Tom's, or cousin Charley's, entitled, "Helps over Hard Places;" and perhaps you have said, as you finished it, —

"I wonder if nobody knows that *girls* are little pilgrims, too, and meet just as many swamps and lions as the boys? I wonder if nobody thinks that *our* feet grow tired, and that we need a little help to climb some of *our* hills, which are just as big and

rough as the one that almost discouraged Dick Sterling and Sam Hardy?"

Yes, little sisters, *I* know it, and I have been thinking about you for a long time, as the little readers of the "Congregationalist" and "Child at Home" may have already suspected. I know you have a hard journey before you, and I now send you some friends to keep you company.

"Flaxy," and "Prue," and "Princess Pearlypat," are each carrying a plank to help you over the worst swamps. "Dudley," "Fifine," and "Jamie," can tell you where the lions are, and can show you the best paths over the hills. If it should grow dark and cloudy during the day, do not be afraid of the showers. Little "Phebe" will tell you what to do when it rains. Somewhere on the road you may come across "Dreaming Susy," fast asleep among the great crimson poppy flowers of indolence and self-indulgence, and I'm afraid you will not be able to rouse her. Do not stay to look at her long, for you might grow sleepy yourself; and words can not tell what a sad thing it is to *dream* one's life away.

Press on, dear little ones. Do not turn aside into the pleasant by-paths, no matter how rough the way may be. And if at last, in the twilight, you come into a strange, dim land, and begin to tremble a little at the shadows, you shall hear a sweet voice say, — “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

And if, still later, you come to a dark, cold river, and the worn little feet falter, and can not go any further, then will the Good Shepherd come, and tenderly lifting all the tired lambs, he will carry them safe in his bosom.

L. P.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

I.

THE LITTLE SCHOOL-GIRL'S STORY.

As the old town clock was just upon the stroke of seven, one gray Saturday morning, from five or six different windows looked eight pairs of eyes, and accompanying each pair, in a direct line above the nose, lay two or three of the deepest, perpendicular wrinkles, while eight small mouths fell away so suddenly at the corners, that a smile could never have got over without tripping.

"Gray! gray as a rat!" cried Dick Bloom, turning from the window, and carving the three wrinkles deeper than ever on his nice white forehead.

"It's another equinoctial, I know," sighed funny little Prue, who could not look cross,

though she tried to show as many wrinkles as Dick.

"I declare," said Flaxy Bell, parting the red curtains at the corner brick house, "I can hardly see two inches in this mist. One would think it was a grand washing-day, and every body's chimney was turned upside down, and smoking the wrong way."

"No nutting to-day," called out Bernard Granville, from the green blinds across the street.

But they were all mistaken. An hour passed on, and behold! down the gray dropped a little yellow thread of light, which grew till it was a great golden cord, strong enough to lift the heavy gray curtain. The eager eyes could hardly believe it, but slowly, slowly, it was raised. Now they could see the old tree at the end of the meadow which had grown yellow,—the greedy old fellow,—from drinking so much sunlight all summer, and now they could see the crimson maples like gay soldiers on guard at the edge of the pine woods. Oh! there was never any thing so beautiful! The sky changed by magic to the tenderest blue, and the watching eyes grew so soft and sunny, you would hardly

have known them for the same. And so the nutting party came off, after all. But this isn't at all what I meant to tell you. I only meant to say that it was a very pleasant day; but then, after all, you would never have guessed just how pleasant it was, and I wanted you to know exactly how happy all these children felt.

Well, I won't tell you much about the nutting. You can just imagine that all the baskets are very full, and that after they have made fires of dead leaves, and roasted some of their nuts, and done a variety of other things, they yet do not feel quite ready to go home. So they sit down on some nice, dry pine-needles on the western side of the wood, with the warm sun shining on the pretty plaid shawls and red caps, with the bright yellow and scarlet trees bowing around like so many great princes at some grand Eastern court, and begin to talk cosily together.

"Let some one tell a story," cried Dudley Wylde.

"Let's *each* tell one," said his pale cousin Bernard, "just as the people did in the stage-coach that Dickens once told about."

"Why, they all told their *own* story," said Madge Pattison.

"Well, so can we, too," retorted Bernard.

"I'm sure I haven't a word to tell," cried one. "Nor I," "Nor I," came from every side; while Dudley Wylde exclaimed, "Nothing ever happened to me, but breakfast and dinner, and going to school, and going to bed. Sometimes I have a good dinner, and sometimes I don't, sometimes I know my lessons, and sometimes I don't; and that's all *my* story."

"No, no!" said Bernard, laughing. "I'm sure something has happened to every one of us, that would be very interesting if we would only think, and tell it as well as we could."

"Tell it just like a book," asked little Dick Bloom, "with a nice little moral pinned on to the end?"

"Oh, just as you please about *that*," said Bernard. "If the story-teller hasn't a moral handy, we'll each fit one to suit ourselves."

"Agreed," cried they all. "Who shall begin?"

"Well," cried little Flaxy, — whose real name was Mary, but who was always called

Flaxy because her hair was almost white,—
“I believe *I*’ll begin, for I haven’t a very good story to tell, and I’d like to have it over with.” So she folded her little red shawl around her, and began.

“Once, you know, before we moved into the village, we lived away up in the country, and the neighbors were almost as far from each other as from one end of the town to the other. Well, one night in December,—a dreary, windy night,—there came a boy for father and mother to go and see ‘old Uncle Benny,’—he wasn’t a real relation, you know, but a sort of every body’s uncle. Well, the boy said Uncle Benny was dying, and wanted to see father and mother. So, of course, they bundled all up, and went. And when they kissed us good-night, said father :

“‘Now, Flaxy, we will come back as soon as we can, but we may have to stay very late. If you would like to sit up, and keep Peggy company, you may, but Charley must go to bed. And Peggy must shut the windows, and put the bar to the door, and if any one comes, you must first ask who it is ; and you had better send all strangers on to the tavern, for it is only a little further ; and if

you should happen to get a bad man in here, I don't know what you and Peggy would do all alone.'

"So I promised to do just as he said, and they both drove away. After they were gone, it was very lonely. Peggy barred the door, and we all went to sit in the kitchen. Charley begged to stay up a little while, and we sat on two little low stools, holding each other's hands, listening to the wind, and looking into the great fire, and watching the shadows that went bobbing around when the tallow candle flickered, and the wick grew long. Then once in a while Peggy told us a dreary story about evil spirits being out such nights as this; and though Charley and I knew that God is always near his children, and can take care of them, no matter how dark and dreadful the night, we could not help shuddering when the sleet dashed up against the panes, and we heard the wind screech and groan, just as if some one was being murdered. We were just talking in a very low whisper about poor Uncle Benny, and how terrible it was to die in such a storm, when suddenly there came a loud knock at the door. It was so very sudden

and loud that we all jumped, and Charley fairly fell off his stool.

“‘Who *do* you suppose it is, Peggy?’ said I; but Peggy covered her face with her apron, and rocked to and fro. So we were just as still as death for a few minutes, and then we heard something at the window.

“‘Oh! what is it, Peggy?’ said I again.

“‘Uncle Benny’s *ghost!*’ said Peggy, in an awful whisper, with her teeth all knocking together.

“Charley caught my hand so tight that it hurt me, and for a minute I shook all over. Then I knew there were no such things as ghosts, for father and mother had told me so often; and when another knock came, I went over quite boldly to the door. ‘Who’s there?’ ‘A poor man,’ cried a shaky voice. ‘A poor man, who is almost dead with cold and hunger. Please, for the love of God, let him come in a minute to the fire.’

“I was just going to open the door, when Peggy cried, in a great hurry, —

“‘Remember what your father said, Miss Flaxy.’ I was quite angry with her; but I called through the door that he must go on to the tavern, which was very near. But he

begged so humbly just to come in and warm himself, 'only a minute, and then he would go right on,' that I was quite determined to let him.

"'Take down the bar, Peggy,' said I; but she only said, 'Miss, you ought to mind your father.'

"But I'm sorry to say," said Flaxy, with tears in her eyes, "that I wasn't at all obedient in those days. I was quite determined to have my own way; for I was angry with Peggy; and father was so kind that I thought I could soon make it all right with him when he came home. So, with very hot cheeks, I said, 'Peggy, you are hard-hearted, and a coward.' Then I began taking down the bar myself, though poor Charley kept begging,— 'Please don't, sister.'

"To tell the truth, I was sorry the minute it was down, for I didn't like the man's looks at all, and I would have given the whole world if he were only out of the kitchen, and the door all safely barred again. But I kept feeling worse and worse every minute; for as soon as he grew warm, and looked around, and saw there was only Peggy and Charley and I, he grew very disagreeable

indeed, and ordered us to get some supper, the best we had in the house. He spoke so loud, and looked so fierce, that we all ran like so many slaves. He made Peggy cook ham, and fry eggs, and make the tea for him; and he ordered me to set the table, just as I would for the king of England.

“‘Put on all your silver spoons and forks,’ said he, ‘for I always use a dozen at a time; and how do you dare bring on this old earthen sugar-bowl? Haven’t you a silver set?’

“So, all in a tremble, I brought out dear mother’s old-fashioned set, with the little carved angels, that used to be grandmother’s.

“Then Charley followed me into the pantry, with great big eyes, and whispered, ‘Oh, sister! he’s cramming his pockets with spoons and every thing.’

“I never can tell you,” cried Flaxy, the tears streaming down her cheeks, “how I felt then. To think that my disobedience was going to bring such sorrow on my darling father and mother; and how did I know what the end might be? Perhaps he would finish by murdering Charley and all of us. I looked up at the clock. It was only nine, and father might not be back till midnight. So I whis-

pered to Charley, 'Slip out of the back door, and run like lightning to neighbor Gaston's.'

"So dear, good Charley stole like a cat over the floor; but just as I thought he was almost safe, the horrid man sprang and caught him, and almost shook the breath out of his body.

"'There,' said he, 'if I catch you at *that* again, I wouldn't a bit mind roasting you on these coals.'

"Poor Charley dropped down on his little stool, and never stirred again; and I stole into the pantry to cry, and ask God to help me; though I didn't deserve it a bit, you know;" and Flaxy fairly broke down and sobbed, while several of the circle kept her company.

"But all of a sudden," continued Flaxy, "a thought came into my head, and I wondered it hadn't come sooner, why I couldn't climb out of the pantry window, and run myself to one of the neighbors.

"No sooner said than done. I lifted the window, and dropped out as softly as a feather. Oh! how I did run. It was a terrible night, and I hadn't any bonnet or shawl, but I never thought any thing about it then.

I hadn't gone far before I heard some people talking, and thought I saw a dim light; but while I was wondering where they all were, I ran right into somebody, and almost knocked him over.

"'Hallo!'" said he, 'just bring the lantern, Bob. I've stumbled into the queerest kind of a post;' and in another minute he said, 'I declare, if it isn't little Flaxy Bell!'

"And there, do you know, it was neighbor Gaston's two nice strong sons, and his hired man. I didn't have time to feel ashamed, then, but I just talked as fast as I could, and told every thing.

"'Poor Flaxy!'" said Ned Gaston, when I got through; and, without asking my leave, he caught me right up in his arms, and then all three started to run for the house, as if it was the greatest fun in the world.

"When we came into the garden, Phinney, the man, found some stout sticks, and Ned took down Peggy's clothes-line, and then they all burst into the kitchen door, just as the robber had finished his supper, and was buttoning up his coat to go. He was so taken by surprise that he didn't seem to think of defending himself; and in no time at all,

they had him down on his back with his bad hands and feet tied up tight with the old rope. Oh! you ought to have heard him beg them to let him go. I declare I almost felt sorry for him, especially when he said that he was only in joke, and didn't really mean to carry off the silver. But Ned only laughed, and Phinney harnessed up, and took him off to jail. Ned stayed till father and mother came home, and tried to comfort me; but I couldn't rest till I had told the whole story. Then Ned tried to praise me, and tell father how brave and self-possessed I had been; but I couldn't bear to hear it; I could only think how terrible it might have been if God hadn't helped me, and I only wanted to hear father say, again and again, — 'I do certainly forgive you, Flaxy.' And since that time I do think I have always tried to be obedient."

"And now," cried little Dick Bloom, jumping up, and falling over two or three baskets, "I propose, first, a vote of thanks to Flaxy. Second, that we repeat the fifth commandment, 'all hands round;' and, third, that we start for home 'double quick,' or *night* will get there first."

II.

THE OLD CASTLE.

How pleasant the parlor looked on the evening of "Flaxy's" birthday. To be sure it was November, and the wind was setting the poor dying leaves in a miserable shiver with some dreadful story of an iceberg he had just been visiting. But what cared Dicky and Prue, or Dudley and Flaxy, or all the rest, sitting cosily around that charming fire, which glowed as if some kind fairy had filled up the little black grate with carbuncles and rubies? Over the mantle-piece were branches of pretty, white sperm candles, whose light fell softly on the heavy red curtains and the roses in the carpet, and danced in the eyes of the happy children.

They, the children, had been having a "splendid time." They had played games, and put together dissected maps, and tried puzzles, and read in Flaxy's wonderful books; and since tea they had had a grand romp at

"fox and geese," even such big boys as Bernard and Dudley joining in; and now they were resting, with pretty red cheeks and parted mouths.

"Well, what shall we do now?" cried little Prue, who could not bear that a minute of the precious time should be wasted in mere sitting still.

"Why isn't it a good time for some one else to tell his story?" asked Flaxy.

"Just the thing," was the unanimous response. "Another story! A story!" and then a voice cried, "And let Dudley Wylde tell it."

"Well," said Dudley, slowly, "if I must tell a *true* story about *myself*, I'm afraid it won't be much to my credit; but as Flaxy wasn't a coward about it, I'll try to be as brave as a *girl*. Shall I tell you something that happened to Bernard and me when we lived over in England?"

"Oh, please don't tell that story, Dud," pleaded Bernard, with reddening cheeks; but all the rest cried, "Oh, yes; go on, go on;" and Dudley began.

"You all know that Bernard and I were both left orphans when we were almost little

babies, and Uncle Wylde sent for us to come and live with him—me first, and Bernard about a year afterward. I was only six years old when Bernard came, but I remember I was very angry about it. Old Joe, the coachman, and I had had a quarrel that morning, and he told me ‘uncle would never care for me any more after cousin Bernard came; for he was a much finer boy than I, and looked like a young English lord, with his blue eyes and white skin; but *I* was a little, dark, ill-tempered foreigner (my mother was an Italian, you know), and he wondered how uncle could like me at all.’”

“But uncle did love you dearly, you know,” broke in Bernard.

“A great deal better than I deserved, that’s certain,” said Dudley; “but I almost worshiped *him*, and I couldn’t bear the thoughts of his loving any one better than me. So all the day that Bernard was expected I stood sulkily by the window, and would not play, nor eat, nor even speak when Uncle Wylde came and took me in his lap.

“‘Poor child,’ said uncle, at last. ‘He needs some one of his own age to play with.

I hope the little cousins will be fine company for each other.'

"Just then the carriage drove up, and uncle ran out and took such a lovely little boy in his arms; but when I heard him say, almost with a sob, 'Darling child, you are just the image of your dear, dear mother,' then I thought, 'There, it is all true what Joe said; uncle loves him the best already;' and I bit my fingers, so that when uncle bade me hold out my hand to my cousin he was frightened to see it covered with blood, and drew back with a shiver; and then I grew angry about that, too, and called him '*proud*,' and went and hid away every plaything I could find.

"Well, I won't have time to tell you every little thing; only that as Bernard and I grew up together, I did not love him any better. He was almost always kind and good."

"Now, Dud, you must not say so," said Bernard, blushing. "I did every thing to tease you."

"You must not interrupt," cried Dudley. "This is *my* story, remember. You never teased me much; but the great thing I couldn't forgive you for was that uncle loved you best."

"No, I'm sure he didn't," cried Bernard.

"No more interruptions," said all the children; and Dudley went on.

"Well, you see I was very suspicious and miserable, and I always thought Bernard wanted to make fun of me. When he first began to call me 'Dud,' for *short*, I thought he meant that I was like the old rags that Joe used to clean the carriages with, for he always used to call them 'old duds.' And then sometimes, when I came in from riding on Lightfoot's bare back, with my hair blown every sort of a way, if he said, 'Shall we have our lessons now, uncle? Here comes *Wylde*,' I always thought he was trying to make uncle think I was *wild*, like those horrid Indians we used to read about, while he, Bernard, was always neat and smooth, like a little gentleman. So you see there was nothing that Bernard could do or say that I did not twist around to make myself miserable.

"One day, when I had been playing with my dog Sambo half the morning, and riding Lightfoot the rest of the time, I was called on to recite Latin to uncle, and didn't know one word. But Bernard recited like a book, and when it was over, uncle did not scold me,

— he never did, — but just gave Bernard the pretty picture I had long been wanting, of the boy climbing up over crag and ice, shouting ‘Excelsior.’

“That very afternoon we had planned to take a walk together to an old ruined castle; but I was so cross and sullen I wonder Bernard did not slip away and go alone. I can’t begin to tell you how envious and unhappy I felt; and I quarreled so with him about every little thing, that at last he scarcely opened his mouth.”

“I don’t believe the story is true,” said Flaxy, indignantly. “I’m sure the Dudley Wylde *we* know was never so bad and quarrelsome.”

Dudley smiled, while Bettine whispered, softly, “But he’s different *now*, Flaxy. Do you know his uncle says he is trying to be a *Christian*?”

Flaxy looked up, with a bright tear of sympathy, as Dudley continued:—

“At last we reached the castle, where we had often been before, and for a while I was more good-natured; for there was nothing I liked better than climbing up and down the broken stairway, which wound round and

round like a great screw, or looking into every queer little room hid away in the thick walls, or climbing to the turrets to wave my handkerchief like the flag of a conquering hero.

“But this afternoon there was something new to see. In the great hall, just under the stairs, the floor had lately caved away, and you could see down into a deep vault. Bernard and I lay down, with our faces just over the edge, and tried to see the bottom; but it was dark as pitch, and we couldn’t make out any thing.

“‘I shouldn’t wonder if they buried dead people there, a great while ago,’ said Bernard, with a little shiver; and when we both got up, feeling very sober, he said, just to raise our spirits, —

“‘Let’s have a race up the steps, and see which will get to the roof first.’

“Off we started. I could generally climb like a wildcat; but in some way I stumbled and hurt my knee, and Bernard gained very fast. I felt my quick temper rising again.

“‘Shall he beat me in every thing?’ I said to myself; and with a great spring I caught up to him, and seized his jacket. Then be-

gan a struggle. Bernard cried 'fair play,' and tried to throw me off; but I was very angry, and strong as a young tiger, and all of a sudden — for I didn't know what I was about — I just flung him, with all my might, right over the edge, where the railing was half broken down."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" cried little Prue, bursting into tears, "did it *kill* him?"

A merry laugh from Bernard, followed by a hearty chorus from the rest, restored bewildered little Prue to her senses. But Dudley went on, very soberly:—

"Bernard screamed as he went over, and with that scream all my anger died in a minute, and I sat down on the stairs, shaking from head to foot. Then I listened, but I didn't hear a sound. I don't know how long I sat there, but at last I got up very slowly and began to come down just like an old man. It was so dreadfully still in the old castle, that I felt, in a queer way, as if *I* must be very careful, too, and I stepped on my tip-toes, and held my breath. When I got to the foot, I felt as if a big hand held my heart tight, and when I tried to walk towards the spot where I thought Bernard must have fal-

len, I could not move a step. But after a great while,—it seemed like a year,—I managed to drag myself to the place, and, do you know, no one was there!”

“Why, where *could* he be?” cried the astonished children.

“Well, I thought he might have fallen, and rolled off under the stairs into that dreadful vault.”

“Oh, don’t have him get in *there*, please,” cried tender little Prue.

“Then,” said Dudley, slowly, “I leaned over the vault, and called his name, ‘Bernard! Bernard!’ and then I jumped back and almost screamed, for I thought some other boy had spoken. I did not know my own voice, it sounded so strange and solemn. But no one answered, and I dragged myself away, feeling as if that awful hand grew tighter on my heart, and thinking, as I went out of the door, how two of us went in, and *why* I was coming out *alone*. Then I sat down on the grass, and, though it was warm summer weather, I shivered from head to foot; and I remember thinking to myself, ‘This queer boy sitting here isn’t Dudley Wylde; this boy *couldn’t* get angry; he’s as

cold as an icicle, and Dudley Wylde's heart used to beat, beat, oh! so lively and quick; but *this* boy's heart is under a great weight, and will never stir again; this boy will never run again, nor laugh, nor care for any thing; this boy isn't, he *can't* be Dudley Wylde;' and I felt so sorry for him I almost cried. Then, all of a sudden, I remember I began to work very hard. I picked up stones out of the path, and carried them a great way off, and worked till I was just ready to drop. Then I took some flowers, and picked them all to pieces, so curious to see how they were put together, and I worked at that till I was nearly wild with headache. Then I sat very still, and wondered if that boy who wasn't, *couldn't* be Dudley Wylde, was ever going home; and then I thought that perhaps if he sat there a little while longer he would *die*, and that was the best thing that could happen to him; for then he would never hear any one say,—‘Where is *Bernard?*’ So I sat there, in this queer way, waiting for the boy to die, when I heard a noise, and, looking up, saw”—

“Oh, what?” cried little Prue, clasping her hands, — “a griffir, with claws?”

But Dudley could not speak, and Bernard went on: "It's too bad for 'Dud' to tell that story, when he makes himself so much worse than he really was. I was as much to blame as he in that quarrel, and I ought to have had my share of the misery. You see, when he threw me over, my jacket caught on the rough edge of the railing, and held me just a minute; but that minute saved me, for in some way, I hardly know how, I swung in, and dropped safely on the steps just under 'Dud.' Then I hurried into one of those queer little places in the wall, and hid, for I was angry, and meant to give him a good fright; and as I happened to have a little book in my pocket, I began to read, and got so interested that I forgot every thing till it began to grow dark. Then I hurried down, wondering that every thing was so still. But when I saw 'Dud,'" said he, turning with an affectionate glance to his cousin, "I was frightened; for he was so changed I hardly knew him, and I was afraid he was dying. So I ran to him, and took him right in my arms, and called him every dear name I could think of; but he only stared at me, with the biggest, wildest eyes you ever

saw. ‘Dud,’ said I, ‘*dear* old fellow, what *is* the matter? don’t you know me?’ Then all of a sudden he burst out crying. Oh, girls, you never cried like that, and I hope you never will—great, big sobs, and I helped him. Then he flung his arms tight around my neck, and kissed me for the first time in his life—kissed me over and over, my cheeks and my hair and my hands; and then he laughed, and, right in the midst, cried as if his heart would break, and I began to understand that poor ‘Dud’ thought he had killed me. No one knows how long we laughed and cried and kissed each other; but, when we grew a little calmer, we went back into the old castle, and on the very steps where we had our quarrel we knelt down, holding each other’s hands, and promised always to love each other, and try to keep down our wicked tempers.”

“And we asked some one to help us keep the resolution,” said Dudley, gently.

“Well, how is it?” said little Prue, with a bewildered air. “Was it you and ‘*Dud*’ that went and knelt on the steps to pray?”

“Yes, ‘Dud’ and I.”

“Well, then, what became of that other

wicked boy that wasn't *Dudley Wyld* at all?"

Another shout covered poor Prue with confusion, as Bernard answered,—

"Would you believe it, you dear little Prue, we have never seen any thing of him from that day to this."

III.

PRUE'S GOLDEN RULE.

THEY had been skating all the afternoon, boys and girls together, on the great pond back of the village, and had the "greatest fun," as even little Prue would have told you, although there hadn't been five minutes of the whole time when her head and feet hadn't been contending as to which should be uppermost. But now, just at dark, they were all gathered together warming themselves around the great fire in Flaxy's comfortable kitchen, and Flaxy's kind mother had asked them all to stay to tea. Now, while they were waiting for the nice short-cake to get quite brown, Dick Bloom suddenly cried—

"How long it is since we have had a story! Isn't there time to tell one before tea?"

This suggestion met with the usual immense favor, and there were various cries for Madge, Bettine, and Bernard. But at the first pause little Prue broke in,—

"I think some one might ask *me* to tell a story."

"Don't be a goose, Prue!" cried Dick, in the complimentary style brothers use to their sisters.

But Bernard said, "I vote for little Prue. If *she* has a story to tell, let us hear it by all means."

"Well, I *can* tell a story," said Prue, with a slightly offended air, "all about myself, and I won't get it mixed up with another girl that *was* me, and *wasn't* either."

"Good!" cried Dudley, joining in the laugh at his expense. "Go on, little one. We are all *ears*, as a highly respectable animal once remarked. Come sit on my lap and tell your story."

"You didn't sit on mine when you told *yours*, did you?" asked Prue with dignity.

"No; that's a clincher, you terribly sharp little Prue!" said Dudley, with a comical, crest-fallen air, and little Prue, smoothing her apron, began her story.

"I suppose I must tell something true about myself, and just as bad as it can be."

"Yes; that seems to be the fashion," said Dudley; "but I'm almost afraid to hear the

worst about *you*. Suppose you give us the next worse."

But Prue, disdaining the interruption, went bravely on. "You all know when I went to visit Uncle Seymour last fall?"

"Oh, yes," said Bernard; "we were perfectly inconsolable."

"Well, perhaps you didn't know that I had a cousin there, a little bit older than Dick, and just the greatest tease in all the world. Indeed," said little Prue, with a confidential air, "I don't think he always did quite right. I remember the very first day I got there, and unpacked my three dolls, he made believe he thought they were beautiful, and that he loved 'em just as well as I did, and afterwards, when I was 'playing church' with 'em, he got me to baptize (a very wrong and wicked thing for any child to do, at least after he is told better, as we have no right to 'play' such a sacred thing as that) all the poor things in a pail of water, and then, do you know, their pretty red cheeks all ran in streaks, and ore had her eyes washed out, so that I've had to call her 'blind Jenny' ever since. I felt very bad about this, but I tried not to be angry, and we got along pretty

pleasantly together, till one day uncle brought me two beautiful little kittens, one white and one black, and I used to call the black one Jeff Davis, and the white one McClellan. You never saw such cunning kittens. They would set up their little round backs, and curl their funny little tails, and make a great scamper for the other side of the room, rolling over and over each other like soft little balls. Well, just about this time, Joe — that was his name — was very busy making a little painting. You see, he was very fond of drawing, and just with a piece of charcoal he could make two or three little scratches on the garden fence, and there would be a horse, or a cow, or, may be, a great hungry lion, just ready to roar. Well, uncle was so proud of Joe, and Joe was so glad to have him proud, that he was making a lovely little picture all secret up in his room, and he meant to give it to uncle on his birthday. He worked very hard on it, but just the day before the birthday, when it wasn't quite finished, uncle sent him on an errand way out in the country, so he'd have to be gone almost all day. Poor Joe!

“‘Now I can't finish it any way,’ said he

to me when he went out of the door; 'and it was all done except a little piece of the ground, and one wash over the sky to make it look a little more like a sunset.'

"Then he bit his lip, and went away, and I felt *so* sorry for him. After a while, I went up to his room, and took out the picture. It did seem too bad that he had to leave it, and I couldn't help thinking how pleased he would be if he could come home and find it all done. Then I thought of the 'golden rule,' 'Do unto others as you would that they should do to you;' and though I was half crazy to play with 'Mac' and 'Jeff' I just took out the box of colors, and made up my mind to finish the picture."

"Oh, Prue! How could you?" groaned Dick, while Bernard and Dudley choked behind their handkerchiefs.

"Well, it *was* hard," said little Prue complacently, "but I put Jeff and Mac out of the room, and painted as hard as ever I could almost all day, and I made a lovely red cloud in the sky, and the grass was the brightest green."

"The kindest little Prue!" murmured Bernard, in a smothered voice.

"Well, now, would you believe it," said Prue, with a troubled air, "when Joe came home, and saw it, instead of being pleased, he stamped his feet, and tore the picture right in two, and was so very angry, that I went away and cried till I thought my heart was broken. I never could tell the reason why he acted so."

"I can't imagine, I'm sure," said Dudley.

"But he felt very sorry afterwards," continued little Prue, "and we kissed and made up, and then he began to paint another picture, and told me not to touch it, because he wanted it to be all his own. But now comes the saddest part of the story."

Bernard and Dudley drew their handkerchiefs with anxious, lengthening faces.

"One day, while Joe was painting, he was called away in a great hurry, and he just left every thing careless on the table. How it all happened I don't know, but I suppose first the wind blew the paper off the table, and the next thing I knew, there was Jeff and Mac dragging the picture around, biting it with their sharp teeth, and scratching it with their claws. I chased after, and got it just as quick as I could, and just then Joe came

up with a great cry, and said it was all ruined and spoiled. I couldn't begin to tell you how mad he was then. He said he just hated me and my two horrid little kittens, and then he slammed the door, and I didn't see him again that night.

"You may know I scolded 'Mac' and 'Jeff' well, and tied their fore-paws together, to punish 'em. But they didn't seem to mind it at all, and in a few minutes they had slipped off the string, and were chasing each other's tails just as gay as ever. Poor little kittens! I don't believe they knew any better. But the next morning when I woke up," said Prue, with a little tremble in her voice, "what do you think I saw hanging from the tree right in front of the window?"

"An apple!" suggested Dick, triumphantly.

"No," said Prue, with a mournful shake, "it was my two precious little kittens, hung up by their necks, every bit dead!"

"Now that was too bad," cried all the children together. "What *did* you do?"

"Why, first I cried, you know, — I *had* to; and then I staid up in mother's room, and let all my dolls have the measles but I couldn't forget it all I could do; and when I

came down stairs, just before tea, and saw Joe lying asleep on the sofa, I felt so angry, Oh, so angry, that I thought I should like to choke him just as he did poor little 'Mac' and 'Jeff.' So I went and got the string I played 'cat's cradle' with, and put it softly around his neck."

"Oh, you dreadful little Prue," cried Bernard, clasping his hands; "don't tell us you really meant to kill him!"

"I don't quite remember," said innocent little Prue, "but I think I did. I think I felt a good deal like that boy that *wasn't* Dudley Wylde."

"Who ever would have thought it?" ejaculated Bernard.

"Now, Prue, that's a likely story," cried Dick. "*You* kill him! why, you cried like a baby when little Tom only pulled the wings off a fly."

But little Prue quite insisted that she was very bad, only admitting that perhaps she wouldn't have killed him, if she found it was going to hurt him very much.

"Well, what happened next?" asked Flaxy.

"Well, you know he woke up all of a sud-

den, and caught my hands, and when he found I was going to kill him, he was so frightened that he shook all over, and run his head into the sofa cushion, and then he got right down on his knees, and asked my pardon, and begged me not to do it, and — well, I was so sorry to see him so frightened that I couldn't help forgiving him, and telling him I would never kill him again as long as he lived. Then I ran away by myself, and felt so very bad to think I had been so wicked, that I thought I could never be happy again till I had done something kind for Joe. I tried ever so long to think what would please *me* most, if *I* was going to have a present, and once I had about made up my mind to dress my biggest doll, Victoria, in her best clothes, and give her to Joe. Then I thought some way there seemed to be something wrong about the 'golden rule,' the last time I tried it with Joe, and I didn't at all know what to do, till all of a sudden I remembered that grandpa gave me half a dollar when I came from home, so I got it, and ran down street as fast as I could go, and bought Joe a splendid knife, with six blades."

"The darlin'gest little Prue," murmured Bernard.

"Well, you never saw any one so glad as Joe was. He kissed the knife, and he kissed me, and I almost thought he was going to cry. I hadn't the least idea he wanted a knife so much. Then he said something queer about that I 'had killed *something*, if I hadn't killed *him* ; and he was going to try to be like *me* ;' and I said, 'Oh, no ! I'd a great deal rather you'd stay a *boy*.' Then he laughed, and kissed me again, and ever since we've been just the best of friends, and Christmas he sent me the loveliest book, and in it was — 'For dear little Prue. Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' — though I'm sure I don't know what he put *that* verse in for. He must have known that I learned it ever so long ago. Now that's all the story," said little Prue, complacently. "Wasn't it just as good as anybody's ?"

"Yes, a good story," said Dudley, gravely, "but I'm afraid it'll have a bad tendency. I can't see a moral anywhere ; and I've got *so* confused, since I sat here, I'm afraid I shall be terribly suspicious of the 'golden rule' all the rest of my life."

"Dear me," said little Prue, with a quivering lip, "I didn't mean to be so bad. Can't any one fix on a moral?"

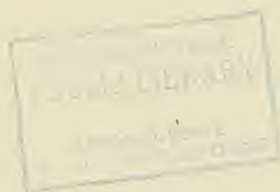
"Yes, Moppet," said Dick, "*I'll* do it. If you're angry with any one, instead of killing him, it's better to buy him a jack-knife, and then he'll live, and send you a 'lovely book' at Christmas."

Prue looked troubled.

"Never mind, darling," whispered Bernard, "it's a dear little story, and I'm sure *I* think more of the 'golden rule' than I ever did in my life."

"Come, children, tea is all ready," cried a pleasant voice from the dining-room; and little Prue, greatly comforted, rode in triumphantly upon Bernard's shoulder.





IV.

PRINCESS PEARLYPAT;

OR, REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

LITTLE Prue had been very sick, but had so far recovered as to sit up in the big arm-chair—wrapped in so many blankets that she looked like a quaint little mummy—and receive the visits of her friends. So one bright afternoon they came in a flock, each kind hand bringing a present to make rosy pleasure dance in the little pale cheeks. Madge had an orange, Bernard a bunch of hot-house grapes, Flaxy a wonderful “picture-book,” Bettine a kitten as handsome as if Hermann had rubbed “Mac” and “Jeff” into one, and finally, teasing Dudley, after looking over all the room, and pretending as great surprise at discovering Prue in the blankets as if she had been a needle in a haystack, drew up his chair, and whispered confidentially, —

"You see, 'Dot,' I've been hard at work at the 'golden rule' ever since I heard your story, and to-day there is such a splendid wind, I couldn't think of any thing that would please me better than a magnificent kite, with no end of tail, so I've bought *you* one, though it has stripped me of my last cent. See, here it is; and if you don't think the tail is long enough, I've got Seward's correspondence on the Mason and Slidell affair, and we'll just make it up into tags, and then I guess we can back *that* tail, for length, against the world."

Poor Prue tried to be grateful, but looked very blank.

"There, you don't like it!" said Dudley, with an air of immense disappointment. "Didn't you say that we ought to do to others as"—

"Yes," said little Prue, hesitating; "and you're very good to me; but you see little girls don't fly kites much, and the next time you give me any thing I'd rather you'd do unto me as you would like to have me do unto you, *if you was me.*"

"Good!" said Dudley; "I just begin to see it."

"Come," said Bernard, "you are taking up too much time. Remember that 'Princess Pearlypat' is going to tell little Prue a story."

"Oh, how nice!" cried Prue, clapping her little thin hands.

"Wait a minute," said Dudley, fumbling in his pocket; "here's a doll that old Pennyman on the corner persuaded me to buy, but I'm sure I don't know what to do with it, unless the housekeeper can melt up this head to wax her linen thread, and perhaps stuff a pin-cushion with these fussy yellow curls."

Little Prue uttered an exclamation of dismay at such a fate for those lovely pink cheeks and golden ringlets, and involuntarily stretched out her hands.

"Oh, would *you* care for it?" said Dudley, in great surprise. "Who would have thought it? You are very kind to take it off my hands. What a good little Prue you always were. Now don't do it just to oblige *me*."

Dear simple little Prue assured him that it wouldn't trouble her in the least to take care of the doll, and Dudley, professing great relief, turned to blushing Bettine, alias "Princess Pearlypat," who was chosen orator for the occasion.

"In the first place," began Bettine, "you must know that my big brother Frank called me Princess Pearlypat, because I was like the princess in a funny old German story, whose hair was so bright and yellow that it looked like a crown of gold. I wouldn't tell you this, only that at the time of my story nobody called me by any other name. A great many years ago, when I was quite a little girl," —

"How many?" asked Dudley.

"Well," said Bettine, considering and coloring a little, "about *three*. I was standing one Saturday night out by the gate, not feeling good-natured at all. You see I had expected to spend all that day picnicking in the woods, and instead I had just sat by the play-room window, and seen it pour, pour, pour, from morning till night. This was very hard, and now, just at sunset, when it was too late, the clouds all rolled away in a most provoking manner, and, as I stood at the gate, all the west grew like a great crimson sea, the trees were all over diamonds, and you would have thought the birds were just going crazy. But I was very angry. 'It's all very nice for *you*, Mrs. Robin,' I said, 'who don't study fractions and geography

from Monday till Friday, and go to church all day Sunday. You needn't feel a bit disappointed about the rain, when you can be playing about all day to-morrow, while I sit cooped up in that high-backed pew with old Miss Prim's big black bonnet bobbing before me.'

"Just then, Paul Peyser came along. You remember Paul, and what great friends we used to be. He's gone away to school now. Well, Paul and I had a long talk over our grievances and disappointments. 'It will be a splendid day to-morrow,' said Paul, at last. 'It will be too bad for you to be perched up all day behind Miss Prim's bonnet.'

"*'I hate Miss Prim,'* said I, feeling that I must be angry with somebody.

"*'Yes,'* said Paul, *'I don't care if she is a member of the church and going to be an angel some day, she isn't near as pretty to look at as a weed.'*

"Then we both laughed at good old Miss Prim, and after a little more talk together, we formed a very bad plan, as you will see as I go on with my story. I must say I felt rather uneasy about it, after I went into the house, and the next morning, when I told

mother that my head ached, so that I did not feel like going to church, it was not quite a story, for I had been tossing and restless all night, and my head was very hot. So my kind mother bathed my forehead and darkened the room, and, leaving me on the sofa, told me to keep very still till she came home. She was hardly out of the house, before Paul's round face looked in at the window.

“‘Oh, you're there, are you, Princess? all right! Come on! Such a time as I had, though! I was such a fool as to play sick before breakfast, and I declare they didn't let me eat enough to keep a horn-bug alive. Come; what are you waiting for?’

“‘I'm afraid it isn't right to spend the holy Sabbath in the woods.’

“‘There, I might have known you'd back out, girl-baby!’ said he, scornfully, and then he changed his tone. ‘Come, Pearlypat, that's a brave girl! I've got the dearest little cave to show you. I was the Columbus, and found it all myself, but I'll tell *you* the secret, and no one else shall know. Won't it be fun to hide there some time? It's a little place. I'm going to call it ‘the Princess' Thimble,’ or ‘Pearlypat's Cradle,’ or whatever you like.

Come; we won't be gone but an hour. Let me tie on your highness' sun-bonnet;' and so some way, I hardly know how, he coaxed me out over the soft green fields into the woods. It was the loveliest morning I ever knew, and now that the church bells had stopped, there wasn't a sound except the birds, and those dear little noises of bees, and lazy, sleepy flies. I thought how very good God was to make every thing so beautiful, and when, as we struck into the mossy, shady path, Paul quoted from the piece he used to speak Friday afternoons, 'The groves were God's first temples,' I began to think we were not doing any thing so very wrong, after all. Why couldn't we be just as good out there in the dear old woods, as sitting bolt upright in the little brick church?

"'Let's try and be good out in these "first temples," Paul,' said I. 'Let's each say the verse we learned this morning.

"'Oh, I was too sick to learn any,' said Paul, with his gay laugh. 'What's yours, Princess?'

"'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he

knoweth our frame,—he remembereth that we are dust.’

“‘That’s a great verse for *us*, Pearlypat,’ said Paul. ‘I never thought of it just so before. Don’t you see, if we’re doing wrong to-day, God won’t be very angry with us. We won’t be expected to act just like angels. Don’t you see he’ll just *remember* that we’re *dust*?’

“I knew there was something wrong about this; and I had a sort of dim idea that we ought to be very thankful if God remembered this when we were trying to do our very best. But I didn’t know just what to say, and so we went on, and pretty soon we forgot all about verses and Sunday. We sailed boats in the brook and had a little feast in the cave, and finally began to play ‘catch;’ and while I was chasing him very hard through the woods, where there wasn’t any path, I saw Paul suddenly throw up his hands, then he gave a little cry, and there was the last of him. I came after rather more slowly you may be sure, and found that in our play we had come right upon the edge of the ravine, and looking over, I saw that Paul had only

fallen a little way, and was holding on to a twig.

“‘Ah, Pearlypat,’ said he, laughing, — for I believe he would laugh if he were going to be hung, — ‘you see the wood-spirits are dragging me down; but just reach me your hand, and I’ll be up in a minute.’

“So I took hold of a little bush, and leaned over, and he caught my hand, and struggled up, but just at the worst minute my bush gave way, over I tumbled, and Paul after me, over and over. I quite lost my breath, and was so stunned with hitting my head against stones, that I didn’t know any thing for a long time. At last I heard Paul laugh; he always laughed, though this time he groaned the minute after.

“‘Well, Princess,’ said he, ‘how do you like playing *avalanche*?’

“‘It’s poor fun,’ said I, trying to sit up, but feeling so sore all over that I burst out crying

“‘Nonsense, Pearlypat,’ said Paul, dragging himself up to me, and smoothing my hand; ‘I’ve either sprained or broken my foot, so I can’t walk, but you see some one will come to find us before long, and they’ll carry us home on rose-leaves. No one will think of

scolding us, when they find we're hurt, but we'll be petted, and have all kinds of nice things to eat, and won't go to school for a week.'

"But as the hours passed away, and no help came, matters began to look pretty serious. Once we thought we heard steps in the woods above, and cried with all our might, but we were so far from the road that no one thought of looking for us in that dark ravine.

"Oh, how many times during the day I would have given any thing in the world to have been sitting in my clean white dress behind Miss Prim's black bonnet. But the day wore on, and when the sunset burned so fierce and red behind the solemn old pines, I felt as if God was very angry with us.

"'What do you think of my verse now, Paul?' said I. 'I'm afraid we'll have to stay here all night. Do you think God will remember that we are *dust*?'"

"'I'm afraid he doesn't remember any thing else,' said Paul, with a doleful shake of the head. 'I'm afraid he thinks we might just as well lie here a year or two, as those little lumps of clay there.'

"Then, as it was pretty dark, I'm quite sure Paul laughed a little the wrong side of his mouth, though he made all manner of fun of me, and said they wouldn't need any more rain in the ravine all summer.

"I don't remember much after that, only that Paul made me lay my head on his shoulder, and I went half asleep, though I always kept dreaming I was an avalanche, and would wake up with a great jump and a sob.

"All of a sudden, when the stars had been out more than an hour, Paul started up with a cry, and I thought we had fallen into the hands of the Indians, there was such a screaming and halloing, and great red torches that flared till all the trees seemed dancing like mad. I thought I must die then to be sure, and, shutting my eyes, I began to say my prayers just as fast as I could, 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' when somebody caught me right up in his arms, and I heard dear Frank say, almost sobbing, 'She is alive, dear little Pearlypat!' and he kissed me over and over.

"I was very sick for a long time, but every body was a great deal kinder than I deserved. I remember that good Miss Prim used to rub

my aching limbs, and carry me about every day, till I could quite cry for shame, to think we had said she was uglier than a weed.

“No one ever said a word to me about how naughty I had been, only one day Frank said, very softly, ‘I used to hope dear little Pearlypat was one of God’s children;’ but I couldn’t answer a word, so he said, ‘Does my little Princess know that she must act very differently if the great King ever calls her to be a princess in the other world?’

“I didn’t say any thing, but Frank knew I was thinking a great deal, so he kissed me, and went away.

“That same day Paul came to see me, looking rather pale. ‘I’ve had a pretty tough time, Pearlypat,’ said he, laughing, of course, ‘but I wasn’t too sick to learn a verse,’ and then he grew quite sober,—‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’”

V.

OLD BARNEY'S MASK.

ALL the highway grew dim in the twilight,
The robins at vespers crooned low ;
On the little brown gate of the garden
Swung Eric and Maud to and fro ;
While adown the dim road, in the twilight,
Gleamed Barney's old head crowned with
snow.

"Here he comes, the old scarecrow," laughed
Eric ; -

"How queerly he dips that lame leg ;
What a face — just one tangle of wrinkles ;
And look at those goggles, I beg.
Here he comes ! See his head where he wipes
it —

It's smoother than Speckle's last egg.

"Ah, he's speaking. What is it ? Some
water ?

Oh, yes, there's the cup on the shelf.

I would run if *you* asked me, sweet Red-lips,
 But he's such a crooked old elf,
 Let him stumble and crawl to the well there,
 And drag up the bucket himself.

"See his hands, how they're shaking! Why,
 Blue-eyes,
 I hope you're not going to cry;
 'You're so sorry?'—why, yes, it *is* shameful;
 The old bag of bones ought to die.
 Only young people ought to be living,
 As pretty as *you*, dear, and I."

Then his scornful eyes swept after Barney;
 But ah! what a marvel was there.
 'Twas an hour since the sunset had faded,
 And yet all the tremulous air
 Streamed in glory, as if, down the twilight,
 A seraph had loosed his bright hair.

And oh! what was that beautiful presence
 That stood in the cloud's rosy fold?
 Cried a voice, "Dearest child, 'tis old Barney;
 For, lying so oft, lame and old,
 At the beautiful gate of the temple,
 His *soul* has grown fairer than gold."

In the saddest amazement stood Eric,
And stretched forth his hands, full of pain;
But the vision grew dim, and through twilight,
light,

He saw but the bucket's rough chain,
O'er whose links little Maud's rosy fingers
And Barney's tired hands tugged in vain.

Full of shame sprang young Eric beside
them,

His eager hands bent to the task,
While he whispered, "Sweet Maud, I've a
secret

I hardly dare tell if you ask;
Do you know the *real* Barney's an *angel*,
Hid under that wrinkled old mask?"

In sweet reverence Maud knelt before him,
With tears in her eyes' wishful blue,
Pleading, "Pray for us, pray for us, Barney,
That we grow as lovely as you;
So that God, looking 'neath our youth's roses,
May find angels hiding there too."

VI.

THE GARDEN OF THE BELOVED.

"THERE, now you've done it," cried John Cramer to his twin brother Cornelius, as he arrived breathless at the garden gate. "You weren't fair a bit in that race, and you ran twice right over Phebe's flower-bed, and took the heads off her very best tulips. Oh! won't she be mad? and here she comes this very minute to look at them!"

"That's a fact," said Cornelius, "and I may as well walk right up and 'face the music,' and have it over with;" and he went slowly up to Phebe, who was bending in sorrowful surprise over her little tribe of tulips that had been so remorselessly scalped.

"Yes, *I* did it," said Cornelius, in dogged response to her look of mute inquiry. "There now, how angry you are. You pretend to be good, and you're not a bit like that girl in the memoir of 'Good Little Jane.' *She* would have said right away, 'Oh, if any one'

flowers are spoiled, I hope they are *mine*,' and she would have been so glad that they were not her brother's, that she would have been happy as a queen. But *you* are so selfish, I do believe you are going to cry. You ought to have been called *April* — it's just shower, shower, *shower* all the time. Yes, here it comes," said he, as two white clouds, with heavy fringes, swept down over those little samples of blue sky, commonly called Phebe's eyes. "April showers!" continued he, in a tone of great disgust, to John, who drew nigh.

Phebe spent a moment trying to swallow something which from the effort might have been the whole range of the Alleghany Mountains, and then, looking up with a smile like a rainbow, said, —

"Well, I'm sure I didn't mean to be selfish, and I am *truly* glad they are not your flowers; but you know these disappointments come on one sometimes just like a great cloud, and one can't help a little rain;" and she added, good-naturedly, "Don't you remember the little rhyme,

'April showers bring May flowers?'"

"I don't understand you," said Cornelius. "It would be a funny flower-garden that

would spring up under those showers. What do you mean?"

"I'm afraid I can't explain it very well," said Phebe, "but Miss Weston was telling me last Sunday that when any trouble came — big or little — it made every thing gloomy like the clouds on a rainy day, but if we took the cloud patiently, and let the rain come down and soften our hearts, after a while flowers would bud and bloom, — fair white flowers, — and the Beloved would come down into his garden to gather lilies."

"What a terribly mixed-up speech *that* is," said Cornelius, scornfully. "I don't believe you have the least idea what you are talking about. Lilies and flowers in one's heart! What do you mean, you ridiculous goose?" And John joined in the derisive laugh.

Phebe answered timidly, "I do not know that I ought to say it, but now, after this cloud, which has been quite a big one to me, I'm hoping — you know I didn't get angry, Corny, or scold — so I'm hoping that there is a little bud of *patience* in my heart. I won't call it a flower yet, but may be it will be some day."

"Phebe," said Cornelius, emphatically, "you're a Pharisee, and Miss Weston's a prig! Now, don't let me hear any more such nonsense, or I'll cut off all your red hair, and give it to the boys to keep their hands warm. Ah! there it goes again. One, two, — Oh what big drops! Never mind, perhaps patience will shove out a new leaf;" and, with a loud laugh, Cornelius turned a somersault down the garden path, followed by his shadow and echo — John.

Phebe turned to the house, her heart so full of bitter thoughts that she couldn't feel at all certain about that rare plant she had hoped was beginning to bud. She had felt a very strong impulse to strike Cornelius when he spoke so cruelly about her red hair, and some way she had a queer feeling that the blow had fallen instead upon that small bud, and that if it ever came to any thing it would be a rather scraggy flower.

Phebe took a turn or two in the garden, and gradually became more composed. This was Saturday, — her holiday, — and it would not do to waste it all in tears. She would go and get the beautiful book Susan Brown lent her, and have a splendid time, reading,

all by herself. But as she hurried into the house, her oldest sister, Caroline, called from the parlor, —

“Here, Phebe, take this glove and sew up the rips just as quick as you can. No; you may run up stairs first, and get my crimson shawl, and my handkerchief, and then just run to the basement and get me a glass of water before I go out. There — that’s a dear little girl! Oh! did you bring my parasol? the sun is so hot! No? Oh, well, you’ll find it in some of my drawers. It won’t take you a minute.”

Up went the patient feet, and back again.

“There,” cried sister Caroline, “how do I look?”

“Beautiful!” was the heartfelt response; and the pleased Caroline, kissing her, said, —

“Well, *you* are good, if you are not very pretty;” and she tripped carelessly from the room.

“If not very pretty,” said Phebe to herself, sadly, and she stole up to the mirror and looked in.

Little pale, thin face, topped with a crown of flaming hair.

“Another April shower,” cried Cornelius

at the door, and poor Phebe turned away very patient, very lamble, and the flowers of meekness and gentleness began to open their sweet leaves.

"Now I shall have a little time to read," thought Phebe again to herself, and she hurried up stairs to forget her sorrows in the wonderful book; but, alas! the nursery door opened just as she reached the top of the steps.

"Miss Phebe," cried nurse, carrying little sobbing Bobby, "would you be so very kind as to amuse baby just five minutes? My head aches so, I'm quite distracted, and if I could only lie down, and bathe it with camphor — but master Bobby is so fractious with his teeth, he won't be put down a moment."

Phebe gave a long sigh. "No, Miggs," she began, "I'm tired myself." Oh! how the tender buds of gentleness and love began to droop! and a great weed of selfishness grew faster than a mushroom.

"Well, Miss," said Miggs, kindly, "I suppose you are. You're everybody's little slave, that's a fact! Never mind."

"No," cried Phebe, falteringly; "I didn't mean that. I'll take him a little while

Come, Bobby;" and Bobby's fretful mouth softened into a smile as he sprang into the arms of his favorite sister.

It was afternoon, and again there seemed a prospect of a little peace. Carry, mother, nurse and baby were out taking a drive, and John and Cornelius, with their schoolmates, were holding a *political* meeting in the barn.

Phebe settled herself with her book in the broad window-seat, and all her trials seemed to fade away, but when she had been reading about ten minutes, and was just in the most exciting part of the story, there came a timid knock at the door. She raised her head with a frown, and there—she could just have cried from vexation—there stood tedious old Mrs. Smith. Phebe felt very rebellious.

"Mother and Carry are both out," said she, very quickly.

"Never mind, my dear. I will sit awhile with *you*."

"This is the biggest cloud yet," said Phebe bitterly to herself. "I thought I had had enough for *one* day. It is too bad! too bad!" But unconscious old Mrs. Smith sat down, and took off her pattens, and laid by her shawl, as if she had come to stay all the

rest of the day. Then she began to tell little Phebe about her last attack of rheumatism, and of the dreadful cough she had nights, how she had frozen her feet last January, and how she had fallen and knocked out one of her front teeth, and how brother John's children—the whole eight of them—had the measles—all when poor Phebe was just dying to read whether Jack Ringtop ever found his way out of the black forest. Phebe was very rebellious at first, and I am afraid that if the "Beloved" had then gone down into his garden, he would have found no lilies. But, after a great struggle, she concluded to make the best of this shower, and she answered Mrs. Smith so kindly, and had so much sympathy for all her trials, that the old woman was full of grateful surprise, and going away at last, she laid her withered old hand upon her head, and blessed her in the name of the Lord. And though, almost as soon as she was gone, crying baby came home, and Carry had a dozen errands for the willing hands and feet, still Phebe felt wonderfully happy, and the buds of "long-suffering" began to put forth in the showers, while *patience* really burst into full flower.

It was now tea-time, and Phebe was looking forward with some apprehension to the coming of her ill-natured, teasing brother, when John appeared, breathless, with a white face, and announced that Cornelius had fallen from the hay-loft, and hurt himself very much. The news was indeed too true. Cornelius had broken his leg, and was carried to his room to be a prisoner for weeks. Forgiving Phebe was his nurse from the first, and Cornelius, impatient and angry with pain and confinement, exhausted his ingenuity in contriving ways to make her trouble.

"You little fright!" he cried angrily, one night, as she stole in to see if there was any thing more she could do,— "do you want to know what you look like? In the first place, you're about as fat as a broom-stick, and in that white wrapper you look like a tallow candle with your red hair for the light. Get out of my sight; you're horrid! I'd like to snuff you out."

But no sooner had poor Phebe stolen humbly away, than he called her back to execute a dozen different commands, reproaching her that she wasn't more unselfish — more like "Good little Jane."

This was a long, cloudy time for Phebe, and more than an April rain, but the flowers grew fast in the showers. Love, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, were all there, and Phebe was far from unhappy, for *joy* and *peace* are always found blossoming in the same company.

Cornelius worried himself into a fever, and his life was despaired of, but when, after a long struggle, his strong constitution conquered, and he began slowly to improve, every one could see that some change had come over him. His eyes had a different look now, as they followed little Phebe's swift, noiseless steps around his room. Such patient, tireless feet! Such an uncomplaining, self-sacrificing sister! How could he have been blind so long? And that red hair, how he loved every golden thread! As she sat by the window at sunset one day, with her little Bible opened before her, it seemed like a saint's halo around her sweet face.

"John," whispered the repentant Cornelius, "I have made a long April for our little sister, but oh! how the flowers have grown! I see it all now; and do you know I have made a resolve that from this time I will do all I

can to make life *sunshine* to her, for I'm frightened to see her so good, and I'm afraid when the May flowers are all in bloom, they will take her where everlasting Spring abides."

Just then sister Carry entered the room. "Hush," said Cornelius, putting his finger on his lip, and pointing to Phebe, who still sat, her sweet face upturned, and her lovely eyes looking far away into the rosy sky.

Carry looked, and almost started, as the idea suddenly flashed upon her that little Phebe was *beautiful*,—far more beautiful than she, with her red cheeks and brown hair.

"You never looked like that, Carry," said Cornelius, softly.

"Never half so pretty," cried echo John.

"What is it?" said Carry, almost fretfully,—"Phebe!"

"Hush," implored Cornelius, "don't trouble her. *I* will tell you. I understand it all now;" and the tears rolled down his thin cheeks. "Don't disturb her for the world. Little Phebe has a beautiful heart, and whenever she looks like *that* you may know the 'Beloved has gone down to his garden to gather lilies.'"

VII.

THE DANGEROUS DOOR.

"COUSIN Will, cousin Will, tell us a story ! Do, please. There's just time before the school-bell rings ;" and Harry, Kate, Bob, and little "Peace," a rosy battalion, surrounded his chair, and at Bob's word of command, "Present *arms* !" embraced his knees, clung around his neck, and otherwise made such a vigorous attack, that cousin Will sued for mercy, and declared himself quite ready to surrender.

"Well, what shall it be, little Peace?" said he, taking the plump hand of his favorite Lucy, who had obtained the name of "Peace," or "Peacemaker," on account of her gentle disposition ; for she never could bear angry words, or see an unloving look pass between her little friends, or brothers and sisters, without doing every thing in her power to smooth over the trouble, and get them to "kiss and make up."

"Well, little Peace, what shall it be?"

"Something true this time," said Peace, "for I'm getting tired of dragons and fairies."

"Very well," said cousin Will. "I've only five minutes, and must be short. I'm going to tell you about some very dangerous *doors* I've seen."

"Oh, that's good!" exclaimed Bob. "Were they all iron, and heavy bars, and if one passed through would they shut with a great snap, and keep him there forever?"

"No," replied cousin Will, "the doors I mean are very pleasant to look upon. They are pink, or scarlet, like sea-shells, and when they open, you can see a row of little servants standing all in white, and just behind them is a little lady dressed in crimson."

"Why, that's splendid," cried Kate; "I should like to go in myself."

"Ah, it is what comes *out* of those doors that makes them so dangerous. It is always best to have a strong guard on each side, or else there is great trouble and misery."

"Why, what comes out?" said little Peace, with wondering eyes.

"Well, I've never seen very clearly," said cousin Will, "but sometimes, when the guards

were away, I've known something to come out sharper than arrows, or stings of bees, and they made some terrible wounds. Indeed, quite lately I saw two very pretty little doors close together, and when one opened, the little crimson lady began to talk very fast, and said something like this: 'Oh! did you see Lucy Waters to-day? What a proud, "stuck-up" thing she is; but that dress she thinks so much of is made out of her sister's old one.' 'Oh yes,' said the little crimson lady looking out of the other door; 'and did you ever see such a funny turn-up nose as she has? Why, I think she'd keep it rolled up in cotton if she only knew how it looked.' Then poor Lucy Waters, who was only round the corner of the house, felt a sharp little sting in her heart, and ran home to cry all the pleasant summer evening."

"I know what you mean, cousin Will," cried Kate, coloring violently, "but I don't think it was at all right for you to stand around *listening*."

"Oh! do you mean our mouths are the doors," exclaimed Harry, "and the little crimson lady is Miss Tongue?"

"Even so," said cousin Will.

"Well, who is the guard, and where do they come from?" asked Bob.

"Why, you have to ask the great King; and this is what you must say: 'Set a watch, O Lord, upon my lips, keep the *door* of my *mouth*.' Then he will send Patience and Love to stand on one side of the door, and Truth and Humility on the other, and the sharp, bitter, stinging little words won't dare to come out."

"I shall ask the great King," said little Peace, thoughtfully. Cousin Will kissed her, and repeated the verse till each one could say it. "Now run to school," cried he, cheerily, "and when you come home, I will tell you, the minute I look at the four little doors, whether the King's guard has been there all day."

So the children trooped away with their dinner-baskets and books, and Love certainly guarded the doors all the way to the school-house. Even impulsive Kate thought deeply on cousin Will's gentle reproof, and made great resolutions for the future. During the morning great peace and harmony reigned throughout the school, but as the day advanced it became very warm. Every round cheek became flushed, and the restless little

figures seemed examples of perpetual motion.

"Oh, I never did see such flies!" said Jenny Wood, fretfully, waving her hand around her head.

"Why, Jenny Wood," cried Susy Waters, almost aloud, "you've knocked my elbow, and shook ink all over my copy! You're a careless, hateful girl!"

"Susan," said Miss Saunders, the teacher, "are you whispering?"

"No, ma'am," replied Susy, promptly.

Peace looked up with such surprise in her innocent eyes, that Miss Saunders turned to her, asking, "Lucy, who was whispering in your part of the room?"

Susy and Jenny both turned upon her with a very threatening look, and little Peace, coloring painfully, burst into tears.

"Never mind," said Miss Saunders, kindly; "I did not think it was you, but Susy may sit a while upon the recitation bench."

Susy looked black, and as she passed little Peace she gave the child such a violent pinch that she could scarcely keep from screaming.

"You're a cruel, wicked girl!" began Miss Tongue; but Love and Patience kept the lit-

the red door tight shut, and Susy did not hear a word. Little Peace cried quietly to herself a long time, but nobody seemed to notice it till school was out, when sister Kate flew up to Susy Waters.

“Well, Susy, you certainly are the ugliest girl—and, more than that, you’re a *coward*, for I’ve heard father say that only cowards hurt people who are smaller and weaker than themselves.”

Now Love, Humility and Patience had all tried to keep guard, and to whisper, “Poor Susy; she was very tired and warm, and nobody speaks kindly to her. Try and forgive her.” But no! the door flew open, and little Miss Tongue threw all those hard stones at Susy’s heart.

Now Susy was very passionate, and she stamped her feet, and grew crimson with rage, and said such very hard things, that Jenny Wood and most of the other girls took sides with Kate, and there was soon such a Babel of tongues, that the boys left their game of ball and came to see what was the matter.

“What is it, Peace?” cried Harry Graham, taking his little frightened sister from Kate’s neck. “Why, Katy, you look as mad as poor

puss when Towser has chased her for an hour. I wonder what cousin Will would say to *that* mouth?"

Katy looked a little ashamed, and Fred Waters, taking his sister by the arm, led her away home, bitterly telling over wrongs in his sympathizing ear. So the little party separated, and Kate, too, ran home with her flushing cheeks, taking good care to keep out of cousin Will's way.

Immediately after tea, Jenny Wood came into the garden. "Oh, Kate," she cried, "I must tell you what John is going to do. You know he despises that hateful Susy Waters as much as we do, and he says he will pay her to-night for all her ugliness."

"What will he do?" cried Kate, eagerly.

"Why, he, with one of the other boys, is going there after dark to get that white kitten she thinks so much of, and cut off its ears and tail. Oh! won't she be furious when she sees it in the morning?"

Kate looked a little doubtful, and said, "Oh! I'm afraid that won't be just right."

But Jenny talked so fast, and recalled so many ugly things that she had said and done, that Kate's scruples were soon overcome.

But Peace, who had stood by, with sad, troubled eyes, immediately resolved in her generous little heart to try and give Susy warning. Finding Bob, she hastily told him the whole story, and that she *must* go to Susy's, but she'd run all the way, and be back before dark.

It was a long walk for the tired little girl, but the patient feet started bravely on their errand of love. The sun set—the shadows lengthened—all the little birds sang their sweet good-night and put their heads under their wings, but no little Peace came back. Soon there were inquiries on every side, and great shouting and calling, but no sweet echoing voice returned. Servants were dispatched in every direction, but all in vain. Soon the family became much alarmed, and little Bob was awakened to be asked if he knew anything of his sister. He told all the story, and Kate, coloring under cousin Will's reproachful gaze, burst into bitter weeping. But no one had time to comfort her, for father, mother, cousin Will, and all, started forth with lanterns to find the pet of the household.

“I suppose she is blessed wherever she is,”

said little Bob, confidently, "because she's a *peacemaker*."

"Oh, perhaps," groaned Kate, "she's gone away from us all to be one of the children of God."

All night long they searched for little Peace, but she had not been at Susy's, nor could she any where be found. When the morning dawned, all the little schoolmates with solemn faces joined in the search.

Susy Waters, who had heard the whole story of the dear heart of little Peace, came up to Kate, with a pale, tear-stained face. "Oh, Kate, I shall never be happy again. How cruel I was to your sweet little sister. Can you ever forgive me?"

Humility opened the door, and Kate said softly, "I am just as bad as you. If I had only been as kind as Peace, *you* would have been different. I shall never forgive *myself*."

Just then Bob cried, "Here's part of her dress on the fence." Cousin Will sprang forward, and, climbing over, looked eagerly around.

Suddenly Farmer Waters cried, "There's an old, half-choked well by the fence in the

next field. Could the little one have lost her way, and fallen in *that*?"

Cousin Will rushed forward, followed by the whole company. Yes, the rotten old boards which had covered it for years were broken, and *there* was another piece of the little blue dress.

Cousin Will shuddered, and threw himself down to look over the brink. Then came a wild, triumphant cry! The old well was nearly filled up with rubbish. She had only fallen a little way, and there, bathed in the rosy morning light, the eager eyes, looking over, saw the fair hair, and the sweet, calm eyes of little Peace. Every boy's cap took a turn in the air, and a clear, ringing "hurrah!" carried the good news to every house in the place.

Then followed warm embraces, and happy tears, as the child was passed from friend to friend. Then, while Susy, Jenny, and Kate knelt hand in hand, the good old minister, with his hand on the head of little Peace, offered up a fervent thanksgiving. And after praying that the little lambs might never forget the lesson of the night, but that God would teach them that life and death were in the

power of the tongue, and that he would always keep the doors of all those tender mouths, he added, reverently, —

“O Lord, open *Thou* our lips, and our mouths shall show forth thy praise.” And all the children said, “Amen.”

G

VIII.

WALKING IN LOVE.

THERE could not have been a more beautiful day. To be sure, there had been a few clouds early in the morning, but, as Nelly Warren declared, there was only enough water in them for the sun to wash his face, and give his little flower-children each a drink. And now every thing was *so* bright and beautiful, and every little drop dancing on the grass-blades was shaking and twinkling to think what a fright it had given the boys and girls, when it was only "playing rain."

For you must know it was a holiday in the little village Academy, and all the scholars were going to take their dinners and spend the happy day in the woods.

It was a very pleasant sight when the children started in company from the Academy gate. There were such sunny smiles playing "hide and seek" in the merry dimples — such bright eyes — blue, black, and gray — such

nimble, dancing feet, and oh! such a chatter, it would have utterly discouraged a full convention of magpies and mocking-birds, if they had been within hearing distance.

Bob Patterson *would* walk with pretty Belle Hamilton, and very politely carried the basket with the nice sandwiches and cake packed cosily within. Charley Graham was looking for Nelly Warren, who was not really so very pretty, but was so *good*, that all her little mates would have been quite offended with any one who did not think her beautiful. Her face was quite sunburned and freckled, and her eyes were certainly gray, but she had a kind and loving heart, was always ready to do any thing to make others happy, — in short, the whole secret of little Nelly's beauty was, that she tried to "*walk in love*."

"Come, Nelly," cried Charley, "let me have your basket, and I'll hold your little brother's hand, too. Come, they will get ahead of us!"

"Charley," whispered Nelly, "no one will walk with poor Phil Barton."

"Well, *I* don't want to," said Susy Gifford, pouting; "he walks so slow, and is so awkward, and then he isn't full of fun, like the rest of us."

"I don't see why he wanted to come," said Fanny Smythe. "If I were such a scare-a-crow as he, I'd go and live with the owls, and never show myself in day-light."

"Oh, Fanny," exclaimed Nelly, "how could you? I'm almost sure he heard you;" and she looked anxiously after a little deformed boy, who limped slowly away from the group.

Fanny looked a little uneasy, and turned away, arm-in-arm with Susy.

"Now, do come, Nelly," said Charley. "Never mind Phil—he's used to walking alone."

"Oh," said Nelly, almost crying, "he's been talking of this walk all the week, and he thought he was going to be so happy. *Now*, I'm afraid he won't enjoy it at all. I believe I *must* walk with him, Charley," she said, half pleadingly.

"Well, Nelly Warren, you're a perfect goose!" cried Charley, angrily, "and always do the queerest, most provoking things in the world;" and he, too, turned quickly away, and hastened after the rest.

What a change a few angry words can make. Nelly thought, for a moment, it was growing dark and was going to rain, but it

was only a little mistiness in her own eyes, and hastily passing the back of her little brown hand across them, she ran on to Phil.

The poor boy was standing quite alone, with a most pitiful look of patient sadness in his great brown eyes.

"Will you walk with me, Phil?" asked Nelly, in her most cheerful tone.

The boy started, and said, with a sad but grateful smile, "No, Nelly, thank you just the same, but I think I won't go. I don't feel quite well."

The tears overflowed Nelly's eyes, as she took his poor, thin hand. "I know all about it, Phil. You must not mind what the girls said. They did not mean it—they didn't think,—that's all. Now don't be angry, Phil."

"I am not angry," said the boy, very quietly, "but I suppose I *must* be a perfect fright; and I'll spoil all the fun for the rest."

"Not at all," cried Nelly, emphatically. "Why, Phil, you have a very pleasant face. You know all the boys and girls like you just as soon as they really know you; but sometimes you're *proud* just a *little*, and turn away from them, and that provokes them, and hurts

their feelings, so they won't try to go with you any more. Don't you know it, Phil?"

"Perhaps it is so," said Phil, very humbly; "but I always think they're kind, because they're so sorry for me, and all the time they are longing to be somewhere else. Oh! Nelly, you don't know how hard"—Phil burst into tears.

Nelly tried to say something, but could only cry too; and it was just the best thing she could do. There is no sympathy so sweet and consoling as just to "weep with those that weep." So, after the little outburst was over, Phil felt much better, and was easily persuaded to go on with Nelly. Indeed, the whole aspect of things seemed changed, for any way seems pleasant if we are only "walking in love."

The party, who were some distance in advance, waited at the entrance of the wood for Nelly and her friend. "Isn't she a curious girl?" said Susy Gifford. "I wouldn't be so odd for all the world," said Fanny Smythe. "She is just the best girl in the Academy," said Charley Graham, who began to be thoroughly sorry for his rude speech.

"Yes, that she is," echoed Belle Hamilton,

with an affectionate generosity, which made her look prettier than ever.

Now they all went into the cool, green woods, fragrant with wild-flowers and the odorous pine trees. As they danced along with singing and laughter, Phil quietly gathered the sweetest and freshest blossoms, and made them into a wreath for Nelly. But she noticed that, in the little bouquet he carried in his own hand, although the *flowers* were beautiful, every *stem* was crooked, and a great many had strange, misshapen leaves.

"Why do you pick flowers with such crooked stems and leaves?" asked Nelly.

"They are like me," replied poor, patient Phil, with a smile that made Nelly feel like bursting into tears.

"Don't feel bad, Nelly," he added, quickly. "I like just such flowers. I like to look at them, and think that, perhaps, if I try very hard, I may have a beautiful soul, which will some time come out, and make me pleasant and lovely, just like these sweet flowers on their crooked stems. All of this kind of plants, Nelly, always make me think of very homely persons who have beautiful thoughts."

Nelly looked sympathizing, and was glad

Phil was pleased, though she did not exactly understand the odd fancies of the boy, who had never known what it was to be careless and happy, and who was thoughtful far beyond his years.

The rest of the morning passed very happily. The boys and girls were very good-natured after all, and, following Nelly's example, were all so kind to Phil, that it was by far the happiest day he had known in weeks.

And Phil himself was never more anxious to please. He knew just where the prettiest flowers grew, and gathered them for the girls. He made little bridges across the damp places, that they might not wet their feet, and was ready to carry all shawls and baskets that were imposed on his good-nature. In fact, since Nelly had told him he was apt to be cold and proud, he had been trying to overcome it; and to judge from the kind looks and pleasant words showered upon him, he was already reaping his reward.

Only once, as they were looking for a pleasant encampment, where they might eat dinner, Belle Hamilton exclaimed, "Who gave Phil so much to carry? It is too bad."

"Oh," said Fanny Smythe, in a whisper,

which was a little too loud, "that's all he's good for. Don't the camels always carry something?" and the thoughtless girl glanced at the hump on poor Phil's back.

"Oh, Fanny!" exclaimed Nelly, as she looked at the changing color in Phil's face, and saw how his lip trembled when he bravely attempted his old patient smile. Fanny was really much abashed for a few minutes, and Phil was taken into extra favor by the rest of the kind-hearted company.

I should make my story too long if I should tell you all that was done throughout that happy day—the merry games that were played—the wonderful stories that were told—the fairy bowers that were made, and the sweet, wild strawberries that were picked for tea. Neither have I time to tell you of all the kind acts and words of the boys and girls who, like Nelly, were trying to "walk in love." There is only one thing more which you may like to hear about Phil.

When they were on the way home, a very merry but very *tired* party, Fanny Smythe suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, I have lost my coral pin that my aunt gave me on my birth

day. What shall I do?" and she burst into tears.

All the boys and girls gathered around, full of sympathy. But they were all so tired, and it was so late, no one offered to go back. Even little Nelly looked wistfully at the village roofs, just visible through the trees, and could not find courage to volunteer for the search.

"I'll tell you what, Fanny," said Charley Graham, "I'll get up very early to-morrow morning, and look all over wherever we've been. I'm sure I'll find it, for no one goes in the woods but just us boys and girls, and I'll have it for you to-morrow, by school-time."

"Oh! I'm sure it won't be found," sobbed Fanny, "or it will be all broken in pieces. I shan't sleep a wink to-night."

"Well," said Bob Patterson, "it is getting so dark in the woods now, we certainly could not find it. It is just nonsense to think of it; but if you'll only wait till to-morrow, I'll go up with Charley."

"And I, and I," said one or two other voices.

There was no other way, and Fanny, with some very ungracious words about disobliging

people, went sobbing homeward, making every one around her miserable.

No one noticed that Phil was missing from the group, but as they slowly entered the village street, Fanny still loudly lamenting, an eager voice was heard, crying, "Fanny, Fanny;" and looking around, poor Phil was discovered, limping as fast as he could, holding up the lost pin.

"Why, Phil Barton," cried a chorus of voices, "did *you* go back? Where *did* you find it?"

"By the brook," panted Phil.

"Way back to the brook!" cried they in sympathizing surprise, while Fanny blushed crimson.

"Poor, dear Phil!" said Nelly, softly; and she thought of the lovely flowers on the crooked stems.

"Phil, you're splendid!" cried Charley Graham, impulsively, — "let's be friends;" and he shook hands warmly with the pale, tired boy, and insisted on walking home with him.

But first Fanny must speak with him; and, from her painful blushes and his embarrassment, they knew she was asking his forgive-

ness; but no one liked Fanny the less for that.

None of the boys and girls forgot the lesson of that day, nor how very sweet it was "to walk in love." Especially had every one a new liking for Phil; and the next Sabbath, as in the chapter for the day were read the sweet words of the coming of Christ — "who shall *change* our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his *glorious body*," — many a glance of tenderness was directed to the pew where sat little Phil. His hands were clasped tightly together, his large eyes were dreaming of something far away, and on his pale lips rested such a sweet, peaceful smile, that Nelly knew the flower was blossoming, and that when Phil had a little longer "walked in love," God would make him beautiful forever.

IX.

DREAMING SUSY.

SOME little friends, when they read the words "Dreaming Susy," — will be sure to imagine, all in a minute, a pretty little girl — blue eyes, dimples and roses mixed in just the right proportions — who has been playing all day, and, very tired, has at last fallen asleep out in the hay-field, or under the apple tree.

But no: you are not quite right, Tom and Kitty, for the little girl that I am going to tell you about used to dream with her eyes *wide open*. All day long, from sunrise to sunset, little Susy dreamed and dreamed, till you hardly knew whether to say she was ever *awake* or not.

Perhaps you will understand me better if I give an account of one of the days of Susy's life.

In the morning would come a loud call — "Susy! Susy! it is time to get up!" and Susy, rubbing her eyes, would answer, "Yes,

mother," and sit up in bed. Then she would think, — "What a trouble to put on my stockings and shoes and comb my hair. How nice it would be" — and here Susy would begin to dream — "if I had a little black slave to come in and wait on me. She would wash me with sweet perfumed soap, and curl my hair in long ringlets, and dress me in a blue silk dress, and put a little thin handkerchief, all embroidery, in my hand, and then, if I felt lazy, I would say, 'You may bring my breakfast up stairs, this morning, Jette, — a little broiled chicken and some toast; and — let me see — yes, some preserves and cake, and'" —

"Susy, Susy!" her mother's voice would break in, "breakfast is all ready;" and Susy, with a great start, would find she had been dreaming half an hour, and the end of it all would be that she would either lose her breakfast altogether, or come down very ill-naturedly, with her hair hastily twisted in a little knot, and make a meal of cold cakes and potatoes, in such very different plight from what she had imagined in that pleasant dream, that tears of vexation were continually coming in her eyes.

Then after breakfast her brother would

say, "Susy, do you know your arithmetic lesson? It's all fractions, and I've been up studying for more than an hour."

"Oh, Joe, please let me take the book," cried Susy; "I don't know one word;" and sitting down in the door-way, she opens at the place. Oh dear, how could she *ever* understand it? What a regiment of figures — $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{5}{6}$ of $3\frac{1}{2}$! How could she ever bring them into line, and find out just what they were worth? Susy scowled and fretted, and then, staring up into the big tree before the door, a vacant, absent look came in her eyes, and in a minute she was off dreaming.

"How nice it would be," thought Susy, "if I lived in a palace, and had a fairy god-mother. There was once a princess whose cruel step-mother put her in a room where there was a great heap of feathers. 'These,' said she, 'are the feathers of a hundred different birds, and you must pick them all out by night, and have each kind by itself in a hundred different heaps, or I'll kill you.' So the poor princess cried and cried," —

"Susy, Susy," cried Joe, "you're way off in the clouds. You're not studying at all."

"I will in a minute," cried Susy, emphatically, and then she went on:

"So the poor princess cried, and cried, till at last her fairy god-mother came, and waved her wand three times, and every little blue and red feather flew into its place in a minute. Now," thought Susy, "if a fairy could only come and wave over this lesson, and make every figure fly just where it ought, and make all the sense of it run into my brain, how splendid it would be! Then, when I recited, Miss Brown would say, 'You have an admirable lesson, Miss Susan; go to the head of the class,' and" —

Ding-dong, ding-dong! "Why, that can't be the school bell," cried Susy, jumping up hastily. "It is, though," said Joe; "and your wits have been on a goose-chase for almost three-quarters of an hour. I took your Arithmetic away ten minutes ago, and you never knew it at all."

Susy rose with flushed cheeks and tearful eyes, and held out her hand for the book. All the way to school she studied, with the help of her good-natured brother, but all in vain. The time was too short; and at the close of her recitation, instead of hearing any

praises, she caught a very sad look upon the teacher's face, and heard that "hateful Patty Porter" titter, as she was sent to take her place at the foot of the class.

But all these mortifications and privations seemed to have very little effect upon Susy. That very night, as she sat with a little piece of sewing her mother had given her, the needle fell from her fingers, and her eyes again were fixed upon vacancy.

"What are you after now, Susy?" cried Joe.

"Well, I'm thinking what if I had three pairs of hands, and while one pair did the hemming, another could sew on these strings, and another could stitch down that seam, and we'd have it all done in no time at all."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Joe. "Seems to me I'd learn to use *one* pair of hands before I was fretting for more. Now I believe *I'll* dream a little too. Suppose people came into the world with the ends of their arms all smooth, without any hands at all, and suppose every time they were very good, or accomplished any great thing, a finger would grow out. I guess they'd be pretty thankful if they ever got *ten* of them. I wonder

how many *you'd* have by this time! I know you'd *dream* you had two or three hundred; but I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you hadn't the first joint of a fore-finger."

Susy colored and bit her lips, but had not a word to say.

But more serious consequences than these resulted from Susy's habit of dreaming. She was very fond of taking long walks, and as she lived only a mile from the sea-shore, she would often, on a Saturday, ramble there with her work, and, sitting on the rocks, dream away hours at a time.

Now it happened one day that Susy had an examination composition to write, and taking her pencil and paper with her, she went down to the rocks, so, as she said, "that no one should interrupt her." She played awhile with the sand and shells, and then, settling herself comfortably, she spread her paper upon her lap, and began to — *dream*.

"How nice it would be," began Susy in usual fashion, "if some great big hand would take hold of my pencil, and, without my having to think at all, would just guide it along over the paper, writing the funniest and nicest things in the world; then how neatly



I would copy it off, and have it all off my mind. And when examination came, I should read it very slowly and distinctly, and when I finished, Deacon Mason would pat me on the head, and say, 'I didn't know Miss Susan had so much talent. I shouldn't wonder if she'd write a *book* some day;' and Patty Porter would just die of envy, and almost cry when she got up to read — 'Lions. The lion is a very useful animal.' And then," ran on Susy, — "what *should* I wear? I wish father was rich; or how nice it would be if I could wake in the morning, and find by my bed a lovely pink silk, and a wreath of white roses, such as the ladies at the grand hotel wore this summer. How sweet I should look! I wouldn't be a bit proud, either, but would walk by Kitty Bell's brown delaine, just the same as ever."

Thus ran on Susy's nimble thoughts, and she entirely forgot how late it was growing, till suddenly the sea, which had been slowly creeping nearer and nearer, sent a little dash of spray up in her face. Susy started and looked quickly around. Oh! how careless she had been! She had been dreaming, dreaming, till the cold, cruel sea had come

crawling all around the little rock where she was sitting, and there seemed no way of escape. Poor Susy! she was wide awake now, and she remembered that at high tide her rock was perfectly covered. What should she do? She called wildly, and looked out over the rough, gray water, and back on the dreary gray shore. There was no one in sight, and dropping down again, poor Susy dreamed no more of silk dresses and rose-wreaths, but sobbed till she could cry no more. But the sea came creeping up, surely, *surely*, and suddenly she felt its cold touch through the toes of her stout leather boots, and with a little, sharp cry, she drew them up, with her knees close under her chin. Oh! how dreadful to wake up from such a lovely dream to such a terrible reality! The water crept nearer. She could not draw her feet up any further, and it rose over her little, round ankles. Susy covered her face with her hands, and thought of home. She knew just how pleasant the old kitchen was looking. She shouldn't wonder if mother had made gingerbread, and was cooking apples for tea, and pussy was washing herself by the fire. But oh, when they all sat down to tea,

and were laughing and telling stories, she would be lying upon the cold, gray sand, like that poor lady who was wrecked a year ago — lying all cold and still, with seaweed in her hair. "Yes, I must die," thought Susy, "and I haven't been good at all; but perhaps, if I get down on my *knees*, the angels will think I'm one of God's children, and carry me to heaven by mistake." But the water came higher still, and poor sobbing Susy concluded she would rather die *standing up*. Oh, how cold it was, and how she trembled! She couldn't stand much longer, and — what then?

"Father! mother! Joe!" screamed Susy frantically, covering her eyes as she felt herself swaying dizzily forward.

"I declare if there isn't our Susy," cried Joe's astonished voice, and his boat swept rapidly around the corner of a rock.

"My little daughter!" cried father; and Susy knew no more till she found herself wrapped in a great coat, held safe in her father's arms.

"Well, what were you about *this* time?" cried Joe, with pretended roughness, as he wound up his fishing-line. "I suppose you

were *dreaming* you were a mermaid, and were going to sail off in an oyster shell."

You would have thought this adventure would cure Susy of dreaming, and that she would set diligently to work, knowing that the best kind of fairies to separate bird feathers, or do sums, and write compositions, are Patience and Industry, and they are always ready to come if any little girl or boy really wants them.

But Susy had indulged in this sad habit so long, that the very next Sunday, as she sat in church, thinking of her narrow escape, she said to herself, —

"God was very good to me, and I ought to be a Christian. How *nice it would be* if I were just like an angel, and couldn't do wrong. Then, wherever I went every one would love me, and would say, 'What a sweet expression Miss Susan has!' and at last, when I died, I should go straight to heaven." So she never heard what the minister said, — "I love them that *love* me, and they that *seek* me early shall find me." "My son, my daughter, give me thine heart." She only *dreamed* that *some* time she would be very good; and as, on the way home, she spoke

very sharply to Joe for daring to interrupt her thoughts, I am quite sure that none of the angels would have made such a mistake as to think she was one of God's children.

Little children, are any of you dreaming like Susy ?

X.

SUNSHINE AND TEARFUL.

Who is it springs to catch the ball
When grandma drops her knitting?
Who always has a smile for all
Mid sunny dimples flitting?
Who sings, till fretful baby's eyes
Droop, sweet as half-shut flowers?
"Tis '*Sunshine*,' all the household cries,
"This darling child of ours."

But who walks sullenly alone,
Tears strung on eye-lid fringes,
And speaks with such a fretful tone
That even Ponto cringes?
Who never runs, when mother calls,
With eager feet and cheerful?
The answer very sadly falls —
"Alas! you must mean '*Tearful*.'"

What bring the Summer's rosy hands
For "*Sunshine's*" heart's desire?

Sweet laughing flowers in rainbow bands,
And birds, half gold, half fire.
And Winter sighs with softer voice,
And drops from frozen finger
Fair wreaths of snow, rare stems of ice,
Where captive sunsets linger.

But what does sultry Summer bring
To fretful little "Tearful"?
Great thorns on roses, bees that sting,
And nettles grim and fearful.
And Winter sends her slippery snow,
And sets her heart in quivers,
When dismal night-winds come and go,
And shake her when she shivers.

Bright little "Sunshine!" pleased with all
That love of God has given;
Some time she'll hear an angel call,
"Dear 'Sunshine,' shine in heaven!"
But where will go the selfish feet,
The fretful soul and fearful?
No *shadows* dim the "golden street" —
What *will* become of "Tearful?"

XI.

JAMIE'S STRUGGLE.

"WHERE'S Jamie?" asked Madge, timidly, coming into the room, cheery with its pretty crimson coal fire and bright, yellow jets of gas light.

Her cousin looked up coldly at the question, Uncle Gould frowned ominously over his paper, and Aunt Gould just said, very dryly, — "In his room."

Madge looked uneasily from one to the other, but no single pair of eyes turned upon her with sympathy or explanation, and after a few moments of irresolution she laid down her school-books and stole from the room. In the hall she met the house-maid.

"Oh! Betty, please tell me, has any thing happened? and why didn't Jamie come to school this afternoon?"

Betty shook her head. "Well, Miss, I don't like to grieve you, but your brother has done a shocking thing, and if he was a poor boy

now, I suppose he'd be looking through iron bars to-night in the county jail!"

"Oh, Betty! what *do* you mean?" said Madge, turning quite pale.

"Well, Miss," said Betty, sinking her voice to a whisper, "you'd have to know it some time, I suppose, and the fact is he's just been stealin' money out of master's drawer!—a hundred dollars, more or less!"

"It isn't so!" cried Madge, in a loud, sharp tone, which almost startled herself. "What, Jamie *steal*? It's a wicked lie!" and she burst into tears.

"Very well," said the offended Betty, "you'll soon find whether I tell a lie or no. I believe he's none too good to be a thief, nor you either, with your mincing saint ways."

But Madge was out of hearing — two steps at a time up the broad stairs, till she reached a little room at the farther end of the third story corridor. She burst in without any ceremony, but all was still in the cold winter twilight, except the dismal dashing of sleet against the window-panes. "Jamie?" she called, anxiously.

At first there was no reply, and then a little movement behind the dingy brown cur-

tains betrayed him, and Madge was at his side, with her arms flung around his neck.

"I knew you had heard it all the minute you called me," faltered Jamie, trying to smile. "I heard the 'tears in your voice,' you know; but you don't believe it?"

"Never!" cried Madge, vehemently. "Now tell me all about it. How could any one *dare* to say so?"

"I hardly know where to begin," said Jamie, with a great effort at self-control. "I'll have to tell you something I've been keeping secret ever since last summer. You see, when cousin Bell had her birthday party last June, and all the girls swept around in such pretty shining silks, or else dresses half clouds and half cobwebs, and you only had that pink calico, it hurt me — I don't know why. You looked just as sweet as any — the prettiest of all, *I* thought; but when Fisher Knight said, 'Just look at my sister! Isn't she pretty? and doesn't her dress look as if she'd bought three or four yards of sunset, and had the moon up all night sewing stars on it?' then the boys laughed, and I said, — 'And isn't *my* sister pretty too?' for you did look as sweet as a rose, I thought; but that proud

Fisher Knight laughed just like a knife — I mean it seemed to cut right into me, and he said, — ‘Oh yes; and how kind Betty was to lend her that dress.’ Some of the boys said, — ‘Too bad!’ but that only hurt me more, and I crept away pretty soon, and lay behind the thick snow-ball bushes, and looked up into the great still sky, and wondered why God couldn’t have taken you and me too, when father and mother died, and not left us to come to this proud, rich uncle, who does not love us, and who treats us like little beggars.”

“Oh, don’t say so, Jamie,” said Madge, soothingly; “I’m sure he’s been very kind to us sometimes.”

“I don’t remember many times just now,” sighed Jamie. “Well, a little while after that I heard Lutie say that *her* birthday came in the winter, and she meant to have a grand time, and invite every boy and girl she had ever seen. Then I thought to myself, — ‘Now they will want to dress Madge in some ugly brown merino, but I am determined she shall look the prettiest of them all.’ So I began to work after school, doing all kinds of little jobs for any body who would hire me,

and I never spent any thing for candy or marbles, you know, so that all the boys began to call me 'miser.' But I didn't mind that, because I thought my pleasure was coming by and by. The money came very slowly, Madge, and often I thought I'd never have enough. But when aunt gave me money to buy mittens, I just went without and kept my hands in my pockets. Then I got considerable Christmas, you know, and I sold the top that Lutie gave me, and altogether, yesterday I found I had just enough to buy what I wanted. So Mr. Green, who is always so kind to me, excused me from my lessons this morning, and I walked all the way to B——, because I thought I could get nicer things there, and, Madge, I bought you the sweetest green silk! it made you think of the woods in spring, and I thought when you had it on, with your sweet, white face, you would look just like a lily coming out of a bed of moss."

"Dear little Jamie!" cried Madge; "did you do all that for *me*? I'm so sorry! You know I never care what I wear."

"Yes, I know it," said Jamie; "and you're always lovely to me. I suppose it is because, as Mr. Green says, you always wear the jew-

els which are of great price in the sight of God. I haven't a doubt, Madge, but the angels think you're the prettiest girl in the world, but some way,—I know it's foolish,—I wanted to have the boys think so too.

“Well, when I came back, just as I got to the hall door with my bundle, feeling so proud that I had earned it all myself, out came uncle, looking very red, and storming about some money — about twenty dollars, I think — that he said he had left in his desk, and forgot to lock up last night. Nobody knew any thing about it, and I was just going on tip-toes up to my room, when he called very suddenly, ‘What have you got in that bundle, sir?’ ‘A dress for Madge.’ ‘A *dress* for Madge?’ said he, louder yet; ‘let me see it.’ So I opened it, trying to tell him that I earned the money all myself; but as soon as he saw the pretty silk, he caught hold of my arm so I almost screamed, and said, — ‘*You* earned money to buy such a dress as that? You are telling me a falsehood! Confess now that you took my money.’ Then out came Aunt Gould, and Belle, and Lutie, and they held up their hands, and looked so shocked, and wouldn’t believe one word I said. Then

uncle seemed to try to be kind, and told me that if I confessed, and asked his pardon, he would try to forgive it. But I could not tell a lie, and only said, over and over, that I didn't, *couldn't* do such a thing, till he called me a hardened, obstinate boy, and ordered me up to my room. And as for the dress, Madge, that I've been thinking about more than six months,'—Jamie coughed violently,—“I heard Aunt Gould say ‘it wouldn't be quite a loss, for with a yard or two more it would make a dress for Lutie.’”

Madge tried to comfort him, but broke down.

“Never mind,” said he, at last, patting her tear-stained cheek. “I am determined you shall have something nice, after all. To-morrow is the skating match, you know, and I think I'm sure of the second prize at least, and whatever I get shall be given to darling Madge.”

“You will be sure to get it,” cried Madge, with eager sympathy. “You've skated ever since you could walk;” and she remembered with a glow of pride that no one had ever yet caught Jamie in a race; and often, when you thought him only playing, he'd be writing his

name, with this rather clumsy steel pen, on the great white page of ice, as handsomely as on a leaf of his writing-book.

"Yes; you'll be sure of the prize, Jamie," she said, exultingly, "and I know it will all come right with uncle too. I'm going to tell him all about it now."

But, to her great grief, angry Uncle Gould would not hear a word. "No, child," he said, "no one could make me believe that a boy would go without marbles and candies half a year to buy his sister a dress. And if he did, he never could have saved enough for such a handsome silk. Besides, what settles the matter, Betty saw him in the library at my desk very early this morning, before any one was up. It seems a very clear case, though it grieves me to say so."

The next morning, as, after a sleepless night, Jamie stole down stairs with his skates, his uncle met him in the hall.

"You can not skate to-day, James," said he, almost kindly, as he looked at the boy's flushed, worn face. "I feel it but right that you should have some punishment for such a great fault."

"But I did *not* do it, sir," said Jamie, imploringly.

Uncle Gould grew quite stern. "Remember that Betty *saw* you, my child. Either confess and ask pardon, or go back to your room."

"Yes, Jamie," said Aunt Gould, appearing from the parlor, "you love Madge dearly, and no doubt the temptation was very great. We have been talking it over, and we wish to be as kind as your own father and mother. Confess your fault, and, as it is the first time, we are all ready to forgive you, and trust you once more. And indeed, since it would make you so very happy, I will even promise to give the dress to Madge."

"Don't be a prig, Jim," whispered Lutie; "just say you did it, and have it done with."

What a terrible struggle went on in poor Jamie's breast. If he told a lie, there was love and forgiveness, the skating prize and the pretty dress; if he told the truth, nothing but coldness and contempt, and solitude in his dreary room. What a struggle! The hot passions raged, and the terrible fire burned through his cheeks and eyes. He hesitated. Ah! is he going to love the praise

of man more than the praise of God? A moment more of silence, and he says firmly, —

“I did *not* do it, uncle. I can not tell a lie.”

Poor Jamie spent the day in his room, attended by Madge, his faithful shadow. They heard Belle and Lutie going away merrily with their skates, but, strange to say, they did not feel so very miserable, and even smiled as their eyes met.

“Isn’t it queer I can be so happy?” said Jamie. “If it wasn’t for this headache I should feel light as a feather.”

“Do you remember that strange verse that mother used to say?” asked Madge: “‘Behold, we count them happy which *endure*.’ I believe I understand it better now, Jamie; and what is the rest of it — ‘Ye have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.’ I am so glad *you* endured it all, Jamie, and who knows what the *end* will be? I am quite certain it will all come right at last.”

Jamie tried to smile hopefully, and whenever a vivid remembrance of his heavy disappointments came over him, he repeated softly

to himself—" *Very* pitiful, and of tender mercy."

It is a week after, and the night of Lutie's birthday. Madge—can it be possible?—is standing by the piano in that identical green silk, though, with that happy flush on her cheeks, she looks more like a moss-rose than a lily. And Jamie—was there ever such a radiant face? What can have happened? But here is Madge, eager to tell you all; how "Aunt Gould found the missing roll of bills caught behind the little drawer, and how proud Uncle Gould had actually asked Jamie's pardon, and since had treated him almost as respectfully as if he had been a grown man, and every body was so kind, and she (Madge) was *so* proud! Oh! she couldn't begin to tell all she felt!"

But who can express Jamie's happiness?—happiness not only that he is again respected and loved—that Madge is acknowledged sweeter than any other boy's sister—that Uncle Gould has already shaken hands with him twice that very evening; but there is a deeper joy, the sweet peace, the consciousness of victory over great temptation. And

this it is which makes Madge turn from the merry, sparkling faces to the sweeter light in Jamie's great earnest eyes, and whisper softly, — "Behold, we count them happy which *endure.*"

XII.

"IN HONOR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER."

LOIS VANDERBERG, with her shawl over her head, had been standing at the gate more than half an hour, in the chill evening air, looking vainly for her little brother, Pierre, when suddenly the boy appeared through the thick mist as if he had risen out of the earth.

"Ah, here you are," cried Lois; "how slowly you must have walked. Father has been waiting an hour for his paper. But come now, do hurry in out of the rain. We've got a splendid roaring fire for this dreary night, and we're going to have hot cakes for tea!"

But to this cheery intelligence little Pierre only responded, "I'm sure *I* don't care if we are," in such a dismal tone, that, as they entered the bright fire-lighted kitchen, Lois turned upon him a look of great anxiety.

"I'm afraid you're sick, Pierre," said she, seeing very clearly that something had gone wrong.

"No, don't trouble me ; I'm only tired."

Nevertheless, Lois noticed that when he had hung away his damp coat and tippet, he seated himself by the window as far as possible from the bright, cheerful fire, and hid his head behind the curtain.

"Now, Pierre," she whispered, following him, "you *must* tell me what has happened."

"Don't ask me, sister," said Pierre, melting a little ; "I'm ashamed to tell."

But Lois persisted, and she had such kind, "taking" ways, that, as Pierre would have told you, she never let down her little bucket of sympathy into Pierre's heart without drawing up nearly all of his troubles.

"Well, Lois," said he, slowly, "in the first place, you know how anxious father has been that I should be 'head boy' at school this year, and you know how I've studied early and late, and haven't missed a single lesson?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Lois.

"Then you know that Herbert Bell is the only other boy who has been studying so hard, and I'm sure I can remember at least three times *he* has missed this quarter."

"Yes, well?"

"Well, to-day, Mr. Simmons asked me to

stay a few minutes after school, and when the scholars were all gone, he said, —

“‘I’ve been very much pleased with some of my scholars lately, and I’ve been thinking I should like to give the one who has the most good marks at the end of the quarter some reward for his industry and good behavior. Now what should you think a boy, about *your* age, would like best for a present this winter?’ O Lois, you can’t think how my heart beat! I thought right away, ‘I’m sure he means *me*,’ and I’m afraid he knew that I thought so, for it seemed to burn right through my cheeks. But in a minute I said, just as careless as I could, ‘Why, I should think, sir, a boy couldn’t like any thing better than a nice little sled, with iron shoes, and painted red,’ for you know, Lois, I’ve wanted one three winters, and father never could afford it, and now ‘times’ are harder than ever. Well, he smiled, and said he should think that would please a boy, and then he looked right in my face, and said, ‘What do you think of *Herbert Bell*? Isn’t he about as good a scholar as we have in the school?’ I declare, Lois, if my cheeks burned before, I felt *this* time as if my whole head had tumbled off

into the stove, and I was choked with the smoke besides. I couldn't speak for a moment, but just pretended I had a terrible cough, and by and by I just managed to say, —

“‘Yes, sir, I don't believe there's a better fellow in all the world.’

“‘That's all right,’ said Mr. Simmons, very kindly; ‘and now I've one more favor to ask of you. As you and Herbert are such very good friends, your tastes must be something alike, and I should like some pleasant Saturday to take you with me to the city, to help me pick out just the right kind of a sled, for it's a good while since I was a boy, and I'm afraid I don't know so much about *some* things as I did then.’

“I hardly remember what I said, sister, but pretty soon I was out on the road, thinking I knew just how that wicked old Haman felt, for you see I thought *I* was the boy Mr. Simmons delighted to honor, and instead of that I must go to B—— and pick out a pretty sled for my Mordecai.” Pierre's voice shook, and leaning his hand against the window, he stared out into the dark, rainy night.

“But, Pierre,” said Lois, “I'm sure you're

not at all like that bad Haman. You certainly don't hate your Mordecai."

"No indeed, sister; there's all the comfort there is in the matter."

"Not at all," cried Lois; "there's something more. I think it was a very great honor for Mr. Simmons to consult you about the present. It showed that he thought you had a noble, generous heart, and were above all feelings of envy and jealousy."

"I never thought of *that*," said Pierre, brightening; "but then, sister," he added more sadly, "I'm pretty sure he saw what I was thinking about, and knew just how mean I was."

"Not so *very* mean, after all," said Lois, smiling. "It was kind in you to praise Herbert"—

"Why, sister," interrupted Pierre, with a look of surprise, "what else could I do? Didn't I have to tell the *truth*?"

"To be sure," said Lois, smiling still more, "but I do not believe Mr. Simmons has such a very poor opinion of you. He knows very well how hard it is for a boy who has studied as *you* have, to stand aside, and let some one else take the first place. Ah, yes, little

Pierre, we all have to struggle very hard and pray a great deal before we can very cheerfully 'in honor prefer one another.'"

"But you can do it at last, sister?"

"Oh, yes; we can so far conquer our selfishness for Christ's sake, that at last we shall very much prefer other people's happiness to our own."

Pierre looked thoughtful, but was much comforted, and so far reconciled to life, that the call to supper and nice hot cakes was by no means disregarded.

One pleasant Saturday, a few weeks after, Pierre rushed in with a bright face.

"Well, sister, it's done at last. I and Mr. Simmons have bought the sled, and it's a regular beauty. Its name is 'Rocket,' and it's the brightest red. Oh, won't Herbert's eyes snap! But now, sister, do you think it was wrong for me to wish for one too? There were plenty more *beauties* in the store, but they cost money," and little Pierre sighed. "Never mind," he continued bravely, "Herbert is just the best fellow, — and I really do think at last, that if only one of us could have it, I would rather it should be he, and I think

I'll give him my little flag, too, so every thing will be complete, and people will know the establishment goes for the 'Union.' And oh, sister, I almost forgot, — examination will end Wednesday, and I'm to have the honor of presenting the sled. But do you know, I'm afraid Herbert half suspects, for he is in the greatest spirits, and says he knows something splendid that's going to happen before long. Some of the boys have got hold of it, too, I'm sure, for one of them said to-day, 'There's something going on right under your nose, Pierre, but *Dutch* people never get their eyes open till four o'clock.' I was so happy I didn't mind it a bit, and only laughed to think how much wiser I was than any of them."

The great Wednesday came. Herbert and Pierre passed very fine examinations, and at the close Pierre arose to deliver the speech which had been carefully prepared for the occasion.

"Herbert Bell," began Pierre, but (how awkward!) there was Herbert coming forward too, and beginning, —

"Pierre Vanderberg," —

"Keep still, Herbert," whispered Pierre.

"I am to make a speech, and present you with a sled."

"Just exactly what I am to do for *you*," whispered back Herbert, with a merry laugh.

Poor bewildered Pierre looked imploringly at Mr. Simmons, who, rising, said, —

"I believe I shall have to decide this matter, and say that the sled belongs to *Pierre Vanderberg*, who has ten more good marks than Herbert."

"Oh, Mr. Simmons," cried poor Pierre, but entirely broke down, while Herbert shook his hand as if it were a pump-handle. Lois wiped her eyes in a corner, and the boys, who were all in the secret, made the old school-room shake with a perfect tempest of applause.

XIII.

LITTLE CROSS-BEARERS.

It was a rosy morning in June, and the sun, who had gone to bed very unwillingly the night before, clinging to the hill-tops with his long, red fingers some time after his honest face had disappeared, was back again bright and early, and seemed to be full of business. He pricked the eyes of the young robins with fine golden needles, till they awoke, and chirped so shrilly for their breakfast, that the poor mother-bird had to stop short in a beautiful little prayer she was just setting to music, and hurry down to see if there were any fresh worms in the bird-market. Then he poured a shower-bath of light on the heads of the sleepy flowers, not forgetting to creep under broad leaves, and touch the shy little violets, so that the modest blossoms — Cinderellas among flowers — nodded their heads to each other in glad surprise at their new golden

crowns, and whispered, "So we are to be princesses, after all."

Then, creeping out again, he met two or three little girls in the road, and kissing them right in the eyes, said, —

"So this is the day for your picnic. I was in the woods all day yesterday making ready for you. You'll find a path all emerald and gold, dry and soft as the parlor carpet, and I've hung the rocks with moss and flowers, and I looked so hard at the wild strawberries that the foolish little things turned red, but you won't like them any the less for that."

The little girls laughed merrily, and hurrying home, packed their dinner-baskets in such haste, that Carrie and Jenny Bell had hardly finished their breakfasts, when the whole eager party arrived at the garden gate.

"Why, girls," cried Susy Wright, "not ready yet? Do hurry, for it is a long walk, and we want to get into the woods before it grows much warmer."

"It won't take me two minutes," cried Carrie, but Jenny stood irresolute.

"I am afraid we oughtn't to go."

"Why not, pray?" cried Carrie, sharply.

"Why, you know mother has one of her

bad headaches coming on, and there's Walter and Fred to be taken care of."

"Well, and there's *Sally* to do it," said Carrie.

"But you know Sally's sister is very sick, and mother has given her leave to go home to-day."

"How provoking!" said Carrie, fretfully. Then she added, after a pause, "But I don't believe mother's head is very bad, and I'm sure Fred will be good, and Walter would help amuse him."

"Walter is almost a baby himself," said Jenny, "and Fred frets almost all the time since he's been getting his teeth, poor little fellow!"

"Fred will be good enough if you're not here to spoil him," cried Carrie, "and I'll just go and ask mother if she can't get along without us. It would be too bad to keep us in such a lovely day."

Carrie was back in a few minutes, with a radiant face. "Mother says we may go. She can spare us if we are going to enjoy ourselves so much."

Jenny hesitated. The woods in the distance looked so misty and pleasant, and

Fred's fretful little cry jarred upon her ear, while she thought how hard it would be to amuse him, and keep Walter quiet and happy through all that warm day. But would it be any easier for her mother, left all alone with her aching head? "No," thought Jenny, "I can not be so selfish. I should not enjoy myself at all."

"What *are* you thinking about so long?" asked Carrie, impatiently. "Come, let's get our baskets ready."

"I believe I won't go," faltered Jenny.

"Why not?" cried two or three disappointed voices.

"I can't bear to leave mother so sick."

"What a mean girl you are, Jenny Bell," whispered Carrie, angrily. "You want to make all the girls think you are *such* a saint, and I am *so* selfish. That's all you're doing it for—just to show off."

"No, indeed, Carrie," said Jenny, coloring deeply; and turning to the girls, she added,—

"One of us can go just as well as not, and, of course, as Carrie is the oldest, she has the best right, and, indeed, I do not believe I care half as much about it as *she* does, for she has been talking about it all the week."

No persuasion could move Jenny, who only shook her head cheerfully, and insisted that she did not feel badly at all, and at last the impatient little party moved on.

After watching them down the road, with glistening eyes, for it was really a very great trial to be left behind, Jenny went back to the nursery, where her mother sat bathing her head with camphor, and trying to amuse the little complaining Fred with some pictures. A look of glad surprise came over her flushed face, as she heard Jenny's step.

"I thought you were gone to the woods."

"No, mother," said Jenny, trying to speak carelessly. "I thought I would like to play housekeeper to-day; and first I am going to put you to bed with your dreadful headache, and then Walter and Fred and I are going to have a nice time out in the arbor."

The happy tears came in Mrs. Bell's eyes as her kind daughter arranged the pillows under her throbbing head, and, darkening the room, stole softly out with Fred and Walter.

But it was no small task that Jenny had undertaken. Poor baby Fred bit his fingers with his hot, swollen gums, but as that did not make matters any better, he threw away,

one after another, flowers, books and play-things, which patient Jenny brought, and was quite determined to be a very unhappy little baby. Then Walter was full of mischief, and could only be kept still with stories, which poor Jenny told industriously, walking up and down the garden walk, carrying baby Fred till she thought her arms would drop off.

Once in a while a vision crossed her of the happy party seated in the shady woods, making crowns, and eating wild strawberries, but she pushed it bravely aside, and kept on her tiresome walk, only thinking to herself that if *mother* was having a nice rest, she could bear it a little longer.

The sun grew very hot, but little tyrant Fred would not be carried into the house, and as poor Jenny, turning in the path, was just beginning her seventh story, she saw a gentleman at the garden gate.

"Could you give me a drink of water, little lady?" said he, pleasantly, and Jenny, encumbered by the clinging Fred, soon brought a cool, brimming goblet.

"You look tired," said the gentleman kindly as he thanked her, and before she knew it --

drawn on by his sympathizing questions—she had told him all the story of the morning's trials and disappointments, though for some reason, she hardly understood herself, she never told him she had a sister Carrie, who had gone to the woods. They had quite a pleasant talk together, and at last, when the gentleman went his way, he said,—

“I like you so much, little Jenny, that I don't want you to forget me;” and drawing from his pocket a small book, he begged her to keep it in memory of his visit, and with a bright, kind smile, he was gone.

The day wore on. At noon Jenny made a nice cup of tea for mother, and after feeding baby with his bread and milk, and giving busy Walter his dinner, to her great joy, both children, overcome with heat and fatigue, fell fast asleep.

Now she had time to examine her little book, which she found very strange and interesting. It told about some pilgrims, going on a long journey, with heavy crosses on their backs. They had a great many trials, and often their way lay through hot, sandy deserts, so that some of them grew very tired and sad, and some tried to throw away their

crosses, but others went on very patiently, always looking as if they saw something so beautiful just a little way before them, that they forgot all present sorrow and trouble. So the story went on, till the pilgrims all came to a very dark valley, through which they must pass. Then some of them trembled and grew pale, but others went in singing, and some of the words of their song were, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me," and suddenly, while they were singing, the heavy crosses fell from their backs, and in their stead angels brought them shining crowns. And there came a voice, "Father, I will that these whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Then the whole valley was filled with light, the angels shouted, "They shall see the King in his beauty," and the happy pilgrims passed through the everlasting gates into the golden city.

Jenny's tears fell fast as she finished the strange little book, which she could not quite understand.

"My sweet little daughter," said a voice,

and looking up, she saw her mother coming in at the door, and knew from her eyes that the bad headache was quite gone. "You have made me very happy," continued Mrs. Bell, kissing Jenny's round cheeks. "You have been so self-sacrificing and patient to-day, that I am sure my prayers have been heard, and that one of my little daughters is learning to take up her cross daily and follow Christ."

"Mother," said Jenny, eagerly, "do you mean that *I* am a cross-bearer?"

"You certainly have been to-day," said her mother, with an affectionate smile.

Jenny burst into happy tears, and held out her little book. They read it over together, and Jenny's mother explained it.

"And will all that ever happen to me?" said Jenny.

"Yes, if you take up your cross daily, and bear it *patiently, you, too*, shall see the King in his beauty."

Carrie came home very cross that night. She knew she had been selfish, and nothing had gone right all day, while there sat Jenny, looking so wonderfully happy. What could

be the reason? Was she doing it to be provoking?

The little party stopping at the gate were very voluble, telling Jenny of the pleasures of the day. "They never had such a *splendid* time, and had never seen the woods so beautiful, and so full of birds and flowers.' But not one of the party was as happy as the patient little cross-bearer, for the angels were singing, "*She* shall see the *King* in his beauty, and the land that is very far off."

XIV.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

“DEAR little one,” the mother cried, “Oh,
haste ;

Thou must go far before the day be closing.
And take this broth to please old Susan’s
taste ;

But softly go, nor startle her reposing ;
Perhaps the poor old woman will be dozing.”

He sweeps his bright curls ’neath his crimson
cap,

His sweet eyes dance beneath their silken
lashes ;

“ Yet stay, dear child ; if there should chance
mishap,

The sun so faintly through the cloud-rift
flashes,

And on the rocks the surf all moaning
dashes.”

"Dear mother, I'll be Great-Heart, do not
fear;

My giants will be trees with frost-wreaths
hoary,

And if the shadows fall before I'm here,

I'll think as *he* did in that sweet old story,—
That just beyond them lies the gate of glory."

The heavy clouds rolled darkening from the
west,

In angry fire the wintry day was dying,
No child was resting on the mother's breast,

As still she listened to the wild wind sighing,
And heard the sullen breakers hoarse replying.

She prayed, "O Father, do thine angels
stand

On earth's far corners, now so dim and
dreary?

Oh, bid them hold these winds, that over land

And sea they blow not, with their sob-
bings eerie;

They frighten *him*, his little feet grow weary."

The child came smiling through the blinding
storm,

He thought the whirling snow but angels,
bringing

Fair spirit-robcs to deck his waxen form.

The wild wind softened to a low, sweet
singing,
And through the air strange golden bells
were ringing.

The mother wandered, crying through the
night,

“Oh, guide him home, this child thy love
has given.”

Then swept an angel, glowing from God’s
light,

And smiled so *soon* to find the child storm-
driven,

Though such as he are never far from heaven.

She knelt beside him in the morning mist,

Above him rev’rent leaned the tree-tops
hoary,

The lips were smiling Death so lately kissed,

For night was passed, as in the sweet old
story,

And just beyond it lay the gate of glory.

XV.

THE LONG NIGHT.

It was the close of a warm day in the latter part of August, and little Franz Hoffmuser was playing in the cottage door with his baby sister Karine. His older sister Therese was busy clearing away the evening meal, and his brother Robert was industriously carving curious wooden spoons, and knives and forks, to sell to travelers whom his father might guide over the mountains; for you must know that these four children lived in a little Swiss chalet, or cottage, at the foot of some famous mountains; and when little Franz lifted his eyes, he did not see a row of nice brick houses, three stories high, but, instead of these, high mountains stretched their grand old heads up into the very sky. The mother of those little Swiss children had died more than a year ago; and as they were poor, sister Therese, who was only twelve

years old, had been the little housekeeper ever since.

Now, when I tell you that the father had gone to guide some travelers over the mountains, and would not be back till the next day, I think you will feel quite well acquainted with this pleasant family, and will like to hear a little more about them. It was sunset, and Franz, quite tired of play, leaned his head against Therese's knee, and fixed his gentle blue eyes upon the glittering mountain-tops.

"Do you remember, brother," said she, at length, "what the little English boy's father said, the night he was here?"

"No. What *did* he say?"

"Why, we were looking at the sunset, and it was just as beautiful as it is to-night; for it seemed as if all the mountain-tops were on fire, and you could imagine the strangest things. At last I thought it must be like some of the grand, far-away cities of which the travelers so often talk. So I went up to the good gentleman and said, —

"Does it look like London, sir?"

"I do not think he heard me; for he just kept his eyes fixed upon the mountains, and

he looked as if he saw something very wonderful a great way off. And while I was trying to think what it was, he stretched out his hands so slowly, and said, softly, —

“‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.’ These were the very words, for I learned them afterwards from my little book.”

“Well,” broke in little Franz, breathlessly, “what happened then? Did you see any door or gate, sister, and did any king come in?”

“No,” said Therese, thoughtfully. “I could not think what the good gentleman meant; for he only looked straight into the beautiful red sunset, and I had seen it just the same often before. But he looked so long and so earnestly that I began to be afraid that something was going to happen. So I took hold of his hand and said, ‘Please, sir, do *you* see any gate, and will the king soon come through?’”

I had to ask him two or three times before he heard me; and then he looked down so kindly, and smiled with his eyes, but did not say any thing at first. So I asked again, —

“‘Is it your king, sir?’

“‘Yes, little Therese, *my* King,’ said he.

“‘Is it the king of England?’ I asked.

“‘No;’ and he smiled a little more

“‘The king of France?’

“‘No.’

“‘Ah! the king of Sweden, then?’

“‘No, little Therese,’ said he. ‘It is the King of Glory.’”

“‘And where is “Glory,” sir?’ I asked. ‘Is it far away behind the mountains, and is it very near England?’

“‘No,’ said he, smiling more and more. ‘It is no nearer England than Switzerland. But all good people are coming towards it every day, and the journey will not be long; but bad people are always going farther and farther away.’”

“Well, sister,” said Franz, slowly, “I tried to do right to-day. Neighbor Ulrich was just going up the mountain with his mule, and a heavy load of bread and fruit, when the mule fell, and every thing tumbled over the ground. Ah, how angry he was; and when I first ran up, he struck at me with his whip, for he thought I only meant to trouble him.”

"The cross old fellow," interrupted Robert. "I would have thrown every thing over the rocks if I had been there."

"Ah, no," said the gentle Therese. "Then you would have been as bad as he. I hope you were kind, little Franz."

"Yes," said Franz, "after a while. But at first, all sorts of bad thoughts came tumbling into my head, and I wanted to call him an ugly name. But I held my breath, just as you told me, sister, and shut my teeth hard; and pretty soon I felt sorry for him again, and helped him till every thing was picked up."

"And what did he say then?" asked Therese.

"Oh! he said I was not as bad as some boys."

"The old curmudgeon!" cried Robert. "Not so bad as some boys, indeed! Were those all the thanks you got?"

"Well," said Therese, soothingly, "he is a poor, lonely man, and has no children to love him and make him smile. I am very glad Franz helped him."

"Do you think I came any nearer to Glory?" whispered Franz, with great earnestness.

"I hope you did," replied Therese. "But Robert must not be left behind. We must ask the great King to guide us, and to-morrow we will all go on together."

"The gates are shutting up now, are they not, sister?" said little Franz, as the beautiful rosy light paled in the west, and the old mountain-tops stood cold and solemn against the clear sky.

"Let us go in," added Robert. "The night wind is cold from the ravines, and I'm sleepy and tired."

"And I," said little Franz, rubbing his misty blue eyes.

Karine was already sleeping, with her fat hand under her rosy cheek; and in a short time the cottage door was bolted, and all these little children, snug in their beds, were on their way to dream-land.

Therese had not slept very long, when she felt a sudden shock, as if something had struck the little chalet and made it tremble all over.

"What is that?" murmured little Franz, dreamily.

"Is it morning already?" sighed poor tired Robert.

But Therese did not know what it could be; and while she was still trying to think, her heavy eyelids drooped, and she was soon fast asleep.

Two or three times she awoke again, and wondered if it were not almost morning; but it was dark as midnight, and she would try to compose herself again. But at last she became so broad awake that she rose up in bed and tried to look around the room. "It must be a very dark night," she thought to herself, "for almost always the stars give a little light. I wonder how I happened to wake so early."

Just then little Franz spoke, in a very weary voice, — "Dear Therese, when *will* it be morning? It is the very longest night I ever knew."

"So I think," cried Robert. "I've been awake half a dozen times, and now I mean to get up."

"Oh, no," pleaded Franz. Let us tell stories till daylight." So Therese, Robert and Franz each told a long story; and just as they finished, Karine, waking up, cried loudly for her breakfast.

"I don't wonder that she is hungry," said

Franz, "for I am half starved, and cold too."

"Ah," sighed Therese, "if we only had a light." But they could not find any, for their father kept all such things in a little cupboard in the wall, and had taken the key with him.

So Therese searched until she found some milk for Karine, and some black bread, which she gave to her brothers.

Then, as they could no longer sleep, they all dressed as well as they could in the dark.

"I will go out," said Robert, "and see if I can discover any signs of morning."

So he took down the heavy bar, when, to his surprise, the door flew open, and he found himself upon the floor, half buried in some cold substance.

"Oh, Therese! Franz!" cried Robert, "come help me."

"What can it be?" exclaimed all three, as they helped him upon his feet.

"Why, this is snow," cried little Franz, putting a handful to his mouth.

"How can that be," exclaimed Therese, "when it was so pleasant a few hours ago?"

For a few moments there was a profound

silence; then Robert gave a quick, sharp cry, —

“Oh, Therese! Could it be an avalanche?”

“No, no,” said Therese, in a trembling voice. “That can not be, or the roof would have fallen in, and we all have been crushed to death.”

“No,” said Robert. “I have heard father say that small ones sometimes fall so lightly that sleeping families have never been disturbed. But then *I* remember a noise in the night.”

“And I,” said Therese.

“And I,” echoed frightened little Franz.

“What can we do?” asked Therese, as firmly as she could.

“Will not father dig us out?” sobbed Franz.

“I’m afraid he can not find us.”

“Well,” said Robert, “I will try and dig through to the light;” and finding an old shovel, he hurried to the door, and began to work manfully. But it was all in the dark, and the snow fell over him till he was half dead with cold and fatigue. Several times he tried again; but as soon as he dug a little away, the snow was sure to fall down and fill

it up; so at last he came in, saying, despairingly, "Well, Therese, if father does not find us, we must die down here in the dark."

"If I could only see you, sister," said Franz, in a choking voice, "I should not mind it so much."

"Let us hold each other's hands," proposed Therese, and they all huddled together by little Karine.

At first they were quite cheerful, and said often, "Oh, father will certainly find us." But the long hours dragged on, and all was still as the grave. Poor Karine cried very hard, for she could not understand why it was so dark, and she could not see the sweet smile of her little sister-mother.

But you would be very tired if I should tell you all these little children said and did through this long night. How often they prayed to the King of Heaven for help, how kind and gentle they tried to be, and how they denied themselves food that little Karine might not be hungry. But at last there was nothing left to eat. Karine was too tired and weak to cry any more, and only once in a while made a little grieving moan. Robert had not spoken for a long time, not since he

had said, wildly, — “Oh, Therese, Therese, I can not, can not die!” and threw himself sobbing upon his bed. But little Franz, who was becoming very ill, said some very strange things, so that Therese could not help weeping, when he whispered, sadly, —

“All dark, no sun, no moon, no stars. Sister, when *will* the King of Glory come in?”

Suddenly a sound broke the stillness — a sound upon the roof. “What is that?” cried Robert, starting eagerly to his feet.

There were several heavy blows, and then a ray of bright, beautiful sunshine came flashing through a hole in the wall, and a voice exclaimed, —

“Little Franz Hoffmister, are you there?”

Franz could not speak; but Robert gave a wild shout and hurrah. “Yes, yes, neighbor Ulrich, here we all are!” and in a few moments the room was filled with kind neighbors, who bore the little famished children out into the dear light and air, where their father, who had dropped down from fatigue, was awaiting them with great anxiety. I can not tell you of all the tears and embraces that were showered upon these children. But it would have done your heart good to see

cross old neighbor Ulrich, holding little Franz, and feeding him as tenderly as if he had been his mother. And, oh! how beautiful the world looked to them all.

“My dear children,” said their father, “God has been very kind to you, and has saved you from very great peril; but next to him you must thank kind neighbor Ulrich, who has given himself no rest, but, when others were discouraged, has always said, “Work on, work on, there is a boy worth saving down here.”

Robert blushed, as he remembered his unkind words; but Therese looked at Franz with a sweet smile.

Little Franz turned and kissed the rough cheek of neighbor Ulrich; then, clasping his hands, looked up to the clear sky and said, softly, —

“Help me always to please thee, dear King of Glory.”

XVI.

"MORNING GLORY."

"MORNING GLORY" was the youngest of a large family of brothers and sisters, and although already nearly ten years old, she was still the pet and baby of the house. She had a cheerful, sunshiny face, and as many pleasant, winning ways as any little girl that ever lived. Perhaps this was because she had such a large, warm heart — so full of love for every body and every thing that God has made.

I ought to tell you that her *real* name was "Grace Campbell," but her brothers and sisters had given her the name of "Morning Glory," because they could never catch her in bed after sunrise. She thought the world was never so beautiful as when it was just waking up in the cool, clear morning. So her ears caught the first faint twitter of the birds, while they were yet only talking in

their sleep; and the first beam from the "eye-lids of the morning" kissed Gracey's wide awake eyes, as she bounded across the clove fields, on a visit to her favorite little scolding brook. This busy little stream was "Morning Glory's" special delight. She liked to watch it forcing its way in amongst the big stones, here murmuring and complaining a little, and a little farther on tossing up showers of diamonds and pearls, and then going on more quietly, singing a contented little song, and finally dripping into a cool shadowy basin with a sound like a chime of fairy bells. By the brook grew violets and lilies, and Grace never failed to come home laden with the dewy treasures.

One morning, as she came bounding up the garden path with fresh, glowing cheeks, singing some favorite song, brother Tom (who is "grown up" and ought to be ashamed to be so lazy) opened his sleepy eyes, and for a moment was vexed with the racket. But as he heard more clearly, he smiled, and said, — "Ah, it is only 'Morning Glory.'" Then he turned his window-blind to catch a glimpse of his little flower-crowned sister, and to hear

more plainly the words of her song. It was this : —

“ All the golden hours of morning
Singing only this sweet lay —
Singing of morning, *morning* only
In that country far away.”

“ Dear Sky-lark,” shouts brother Tom, “ why do you sing of the ‘ country far away ? ’ Isn’t the morning beautiful enough *here* ? ”

“ Yes,” replied the child ; “ but I like to sing about that other land, for Mr. Mayfield says it is a great deal lovelier than this, because it is *always* morning, and God is there.”

“ I thought God was every where,” said teasing brother Tom.

“ Well, so he is,” returned “ Morning Glory,” twisting her rosy fingers, “ but we can’t see him here. We can’t see him till we’re ‘ pure in heart.’ ”

“ Well ! don’t *you* ever see him then ? ” cried Tom, with an air of great surprise.

“ Oh, Tom ! ” cried the puzzled child, “ what do you mean ? I must die first, you know. But,” continued she, after a moment, “ I can see God’s *thoughts* now.”

“ What do *you* mean ? ” exclaimed Tom, puzzled in his turn.

"Why, Mr. Mayfield says that God thinks of every thing we see. He thinks of a tree, and makes it. *I* think bad thoughts and silly thoughts, but God thinks flowers and birds." She held up her violets. "Mr. Mayfield says these are God's thoughts, though he has far greater ones, for sometimes he thinks stars and suns, and every thing that is beautiful and grand. And just think, if his thoughts are so great, how very wonderful *he* must be!"

"I think Mr. Mayfield takes good care of the 'lambs of the flock;' you are really becoming very wise. But now, Pet," pursued brother Tom, "I don't think that old brown hill off there is very pretty."

"I do," said the child, persistently.

"Well, I'm sure I can think of a better tree than that crooked old stump at the end of the pasture."

"I won't talk with you any more," said "Morning Glory," turning away with a grieved face.

"Wait just one moment," cried Tom, with a comical look. "If *all* the thoughts are beautiful, Gracey, I suppose *I* must be very lovely too."

Gracey looked doubtfully at the sunburnt face and *slightly* reddish hair, and gravely rejoined, "Well, Tom, mother says you *used* to be a dear little baby, and I suppose you must have been handsome when God first thought of you."

A shout from the adjoining windows, and the sudden appearance of sundry heads belonging to the merry brothers and sisters, announced that the conversation had been overheard; and the unanimous decision was, that the victory remained with little "Morning Glory," and big brother Tom was completely vanquished.

Gracey went off to finish her morning walk, but her mind was not quite at ease. "Could brother Tom or any one else think of trees, or hills, or flowers, more beautiful than those that God made?" She threw herself down on the arbor seat, and thought gravely, with her round chin resting on her dimpled hand.

Suddenly every thing became confused, and although she rubbed her eyes over and over again, all around her looked strange and unnatural. "Where am I?" cried "Morning Glory," "and what is the matter?"

"We have been making a new earth," said

a voice at her side, "and you will find it a great deal better than the old one."

"Dear me!" thought "Morning Glory," "I'm sure I shan't like it half so well;" and she looked around with great anxiety.

Before her stretched a vast expanse of strange, bright flowers, but, although they were very curious, she did not feel quite satisfied; and when the wind passed by and tossed her curls over her cheek, she noticed that not a leaf in the flower-beds stirred. "Why don't they nod their heads when the wind passes by?" cried "Morning Glory." "Oh!" replied the voice, "so many flowers are snapped off by the wind that we have made the stems very strong and stiff—they wouldn't break in a hurricane. It's a *great* improvement."

"Morning Glory" shook her head doubtfully. "And what is the matter with the grass? Why doesn't it turn pale, and look so pretty and frightened when the wind brushes past?"

"We thought it best to have the wrong side just as green as the other, and then it won't look faded," replied the voice.

"It seems so dead," sighed "Morning

Glory," "like the grass in sister Mary's painting. Where are the crickets and grasshoppers, and where are the little tears that the grass weeps in the night because the sun is gone so long?"

"Oh, we have forgotten those little things," said the voice; "they are not of much consequence."

"Indeed they are," said "Morning Glory," almost crying; and she ran off to look for the little brook. As she drew near she missed the usual merry babble, and looking with growing consternation she found it no longer hurrying along as if it had so much to do and not a moment to lose. All the stones had been carefully removed, and there was only a deep, smooth bed, along which the brook moved as if it had suddenly become old and tired. She missed especially that big stone in the center against which the little stream used to rush so determinedly, and then, because it couldn't go through, would take such a leap up into the sunshine, turning all into rainbows and golden mist, and then running on with such a sweet music, to tell all the banks how it conquered.

"Dear brook," sighed "Morning Glory," "why are you so changed and silent?"

"The brook made too much noise," replied the voice. "Listen to the birds, and you will have music enough."

Grace listened, and heard a curious-looking red-breast sing very correctly the "bird waltz," which sister Carrie played on the piano. Then followed other melodies equally familiar; but, although very wonderful, her lip began to quiver. "I like their own songs best," cried "Morning Glory;" for she missed the faint twittering of the little nestlings, and those sweet, sudden gushes of melody, as if the birds were so full of happy, grateful life, they could not possibly help telling all the world of it.

She missed a great many more little musicians, who were very dear to her. There was no busy humming-bee, no lazy droning flies floating in the sunshine. So many things seemed forgotten. All was so unfinished, even to the strange shadows creeping over the bright flowers. She looked up in the sky, and saw such curious clouds, round and square, with sharp, hard edges, not at all like

the soft, misty wreaths she used to love to watch. And then the sun was so dim!

"It must be evening," sighed "Morning Glory;" "perhaps it will be better in the morning."

"*This* is morning," cried the voice, "and a very fine one too."

"And shall we never have a pleasanter morning than this?"

"Never," replied the voice.

"Morning Glory" burst into tears, and sobbed so hard that she — *awoke*, and found brother Tom standing by in great astonishment.

"Seems to me," cried he, "there is an unusual amount of *dew* on the 'Morning Glory.'"

But Gracey started to her feet, and looked eagerly around.

There was the soft, velvety grass, all alive with dewdrops, and crickets, and grasshoppers. There were the tall, proud flowers tossing their graceful heads, and the violets ready to courtesy when she ran past. There were the pure, soft clouds drifting and melting into the clear sky, and far in the distance she heard the little brook laughing and scolding as merrily as ever. Just then a bird upon

a tree near by turned his graceful head on one side, and, looking straight in her blue eyes, — which he probably took for a piece of blue sky, — sang with such a triumphant burst of melody, that “Morning Glory” clapped her hands and cried, —

“Oh! it was all a dream! I am *so* glad! God made the world! *His* thoughts are the best. *He* made this beautiful, beautiful morning!”

“What a curious little sister,” exclaimed Tom, as he caught her up, and carried her in to the breakfast-table. Here he insisted upon hearing the dream, which accordingly “Morning Glory” told with great animation. As she finished with the triumphant assertion that brother Tom could never think of any thing so beautiful as the morning God had made, papa smiled half sadly, and said, —

“I wish it could be *always morning* for our little Gracey.”

“Morning Glory” looked puzzled.

“Papa means that by and by you will grow old,” said sister Mary.

“Yes,” cried Tom, “the color will all fade out, and you’ll get to be a poor, withered ‘Morning Glory.’”

“Yes,” continued Carrie, “now is the *morn-*
ing of life with you, but by and by it will be
evening.”

“Morning Glory’s” troubled face gradually
brightened, and, looking up with a sweet
smile, she quoted these lines from a beautiful
poem:—

“I shall go *home* at evening,
But find it *morning* there.”

No one spoke for a few minutes, and then,
with something very like a tear softening his
mischievous eyes, Tom said, tenderly,—

“I suppose she will *always* be a ‘*Morning
Glory.*’”

XVII.

PLAIN LITTLE PATTY.

ONE bright December morning, Patty, the poor cobbler's only daughter, was busy as usual, sweeping out the small shop, and putting every thing nicely to rights. The tea-kettle was boiling, and the table neatly set in the little back kitchen, and as soon as her work was done she could call her father, and have a nice comfortable breakfast of tea and bread and butter. But still Patty lingered. She had only to open the door, and brush out the sill, and sweep the bricks nicely down to the gutter; but still she stood irresolute as much as five minutes, with one hand on the latch and the other nervously pulling at her straight wiry hair. At last, with sudden determination, she flung the door open, and looking anxiously up and down the street, began to sweep vigorously. It was almost done, and Patty's brow had lightened very much, when she heard behind her a voice

which made her start, flush violently red, and then nervously put one small hand over the little pug nose, which had turned a bright scarlet in the sharp winter air.

“Ah, good morning, Miss *Griffin*!” cried the shrill voice. “You are as charming as ever, I see. But don’t hold your hand quite so close to that nose, — you’ll be *burnt*, I’m sure. Besides, it’s a shame to cover up such a neat little pot-hook. How handy you must find it, when you go after water, to hang the pail on it. And then you need never be afraid of spilling any thing on your dress, for that big mouth would be sure to catch it all.” And the little girl danced around tauntingly, just out of reach of Patty’s broom.

Poor Patty! She had borne all this very bravely almost every day since Margot had moved into the neighborhood; but this morning she felt very nervous and sensitive, and as the thought rushed upon her, “I certainly am the homeliest girl in all the world,” her small hand fell hopelessly from her queer little nose, and, with great tears in her gray eyes, she looked pitifully at her tormentor.

“How very good God had been to Margot. He had given her a beautiful white

skin, and straight features, and soft, curling hair, and when the December wind came flinging a great splash of vermillion right on her (Patty's) queer little knob of a nose, he only painted Margot's *cheeks* with the sweetest color in the world. But she (Patty) was as brown as — as brown as her old stuff dress, and — Oh, she didn't know how to bear it!" and she turned hurriedly to go in, and crawl under the counter, and have a good cry.

"Wait a minute!" screamed Margot, as Patty reached the door. "Do be careful about opening that mouth too wide, or your *head* might fall in!"

The squeaking of the door drowned the great sob that burst from Patty's breast as she entered the shop, or her poor half-blind father would have known something had gone wrong. As it was he only said, —

"Come, little daughter, isn't it very late? Shan't we read our chapter, and then have breakfast?"

So Patty smothered her grief, and put off crawling under the counter till a more convenient season; and while her father read some of the beautiful words of Jesus, she grew quite calm, although the tears came

again to her eyes, and she shook her head quite hopelessly, as she read, —

“But I say unto you, *love* your enemies, do good to them that *hate* you, and pray for them which *despitefully* use you and *persecute* you.”

“What is the use of trying to love anybody?” said Patty bitterly to herself. “No one will ever love me, — Margot said so, — because I am so homely;” — and again the tears fell fast, as Patty poured out tea and made toast for her father.

“Thanks, kind little daughter,” said the cobbler, as she placed the simple food before him. “You make me think of your dear mother. She had a lovely face, and I think you look like her, Patty.”

Patty started, and a smile of sweet surprise almost transfigured the large mouth; but it died suddenly as it came.

“Father is half blind,” she said to herself. “He hasn’t the least idea how I really look. He has never heard Margot talk, and he doesn’t know that I’m a ‘griffin,’ and a ‘black spider,’ and a ‘monkey,’ and a ‘toad.’ Father is the only one that loves me.” And poor Patty wondered if it was very wicked and

selfish to be glad that father couldn't see any better.

After the breakfast things were cleared away, Patty went up to her room, and looked at herself sorrowfully in the little cracked glass, — heavy, red-rimmed eyes, little turn-up nose, big mouth, and stiff, short hair. It was very sad indeed; and, falling upon her knees, Patty prayed that "God would bless her too, — would make her grow just a *little* pretty, or would do something to make her a little happier." And I think the prayer was heard, though Patty was quite discouraged through the greater part of the day. Margot came every little while to make faces at the shop window, where Patty sat patiently binding shoes; and once she brought two or three other girls and boys, to whom she showed Patty, as if she were a great fright and curiosity, and they threw up their hands, and rolled their eyes, and almost fell over, as if they were very much terrified indeed.

All this was very hard to bear; but brave Patty kept it to herself, and would not grieve her old father, who sat cheerfully but painfully over his work.

But toward night, when it was getting al-

most too dark to see, Patty suddenly heard a terrible cry, and, catching up her blanket shawl, she ran to the door, when what should she see but Margot, running up the street with loud screams, and the front of her dress all on fire. For a moment some very wicked thoughts came in Patty's head. "Her pretty face will all be gone now," she said. "The cruel fire will make long red seams in her soft skin, her pretty curls will shrivel up, and she will look more like a toad than I do. And I can't help her," continued Patty, trying to excuse herself. "What could such a little girl as I do? I should only burn too." All these thoughts were as swift as a flash of lightning, and in another moment, Patty could never tell how it happened, but she found herself running right up to poor, wretched Margot, with her shawl all spread out. With all her strength she threw Margot on the ground, and pressed the shawl tightly down all around her; and before the other neighbors could get to her, the flames were quite smothered in the thick woolen folds; and Margot was taken home, very much frightened, but with only a few trifling burns.

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As for Patty, she was folded close in her father's arms, and they laughed and cried together. Then the neighbors came in, and called her a brave little girl, worth a dozen Margots, — for Margot was no favorite in the neighborhood. Then one of the little boys who had pretended to be so frightened, came timidly, and said, —

“Please forgive me, Patty, for what I did to-day. I don't think you are ugly at all; and when you smile, I think you look sweeter than any girl I know.”

“Yes,” continued a neighbor, “the plainest face in the world looks pretty when a *beautiful soul* shines through.”

“Yes,” said Dame Goodwin; “and the beautiful faces only give pleasure for a little time, for they soon grow faded and old; but God will sooner or later call all the beautiful *souls* up to his heaven.”

“How God has blessed my little daughter!” whispered the cobbler, tremulously. “Every one must love her.” And Patty felt quite bewildered with happiness, and longed to get away to her own little room, and give thanks for this sweet answer to her prayers.

Do you wonder after this that Patty cried no more over her plain face, but only prayed every day that God would give her the greater blessing of a beautiful *soul*?

XVIII.

THE DREAM OF "GOLDEN HAIR."

SHE was weeping, 'neath the apple-trees —
the little Golden Hair;

"Oh, what is it?" chirped the wondering
birds, afloat in crimson air.

"For she will not heed the clover, yearning
red-mouthed to be kissed,

Nor the sunset folding 'round her loving arms
of tender mist."

Then the courtier wind came whispering,
"Oh, fairest of the fair!

Can it be that sorrow dares to touch the heart
of Golden Hair!"

"Oh, I'm tired, very tired," sobbed the griev-
ing little child,

"And I wish I were an angel, in whose sweet
eyes God has smiled;

For whene'er he does God's bidding, in his
harp grow golden strings,

And the angels on the crystal sea make room
for his bright wings.



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But *my* playmates laugh to see me try to be
so meek and mild,
And they call me bitter, mocking names; I'm
tired!" sobbed the child.

'Then the evening wind was sorrowful, and
sighing went his way,
And the robins chirped, "Dear Golden Hair,"
but knew no more to say.
But the maiden, lifting tearful eyes to heaven's
glowing floor,
Caught a gleam of white wings drifting
through the sunset's half-shut door,
And as still she gazed, a happy cloud brim-
med o'er with golden spray,
And two angel-forms came floating down the
tender, shining way.

And one called unto the other, though she
lost the heavenly name,
And he said, "Oh, fairest brother, with thy
shining wings aflame,
It is sweet to pass from glory unto glory ever
higher,
And to reach the seraphs' throbbing hearts
a-thrill with holy fire,

But I yearn but *once*, for Jesus' sake, to suffer
grief and shame, —
Ah! what joy to show my glorious King how
much I love his name!"

Then, with streaming eyes, upon her knees
fell little Golden Hair,
While the lovely vision floated down the
waves of twilight air;
All that passed in that sweet hour, only God
and angels heard,
But thereafter with a loving heart she bore
each mocking word;
Suff'ring joyfully for Jesus, till the child-soul
grew so fair,
That the angels on the crystal sea *made room*
for Golden Hair.

XIX.

POOR BLACK VIOLET.

THE long, long Southern day was over at last, and the sun, generous old monarch that he is, was leaving gifts. Every tree had a golden crown, — every little wave in brook, streamlet or ocean, was eager to catch a ruby or an opal on its dancing crest, and the sweet warm evening wind hardly knew his old flower-friends, as they nodded and courtesied in their wreaths of crimson mist. Even Carrie had to pause in her race on the piazza, and cry exultingly, as she held up her hands in the red light, — “Ah, brother Frank, I believe we are breathing *roses*.” Before Frank had time to reply, a dusky little figure came dancing up the walk. “It is Violet,” said Carrie, quickly. “Let’s ask her to play.”

“Not I, indeed,” returned Master Frank, proudly. “I do not think papa likes us to play with the slaves.”

“But Violet is such a funny little thing,”

pleaded Carrie, "and papa saw me with her yesterday, and he only patted both our heads, and called her 'Bright Eyes.' Didn't he, Violet?" added she, as the dancing child rested in front of them, poised on one dusky, rounded foot.

"You're a dirty little nigger," interposed Master Frank, with intense disgust; "and if you don't stay in the quarters, I will get papa to have you whipped."

"For shame, Frank," cried Carrie, while Violet's round eyes grew big with fright.

"Please, Mass'r Frank," began she, but the boy had walked rapidly away.

"Never mind, Vi," said Carrie, kindly; "he'll never do it;" and coming down off the piazza, she took the little dark hand in her own.

"Come, we will have a talk."

"I's sorry I's black," began poor Violet, all the fun gone from her merry little face, "but I *is* clean. Please tell Mass'r Frank I scrubs very hard, but the black won't come off — truly, Miss Carrie."

"Would you like to be white?" asked the little girl.

"Oh! Miss Carrie, *could* I ever?" cried Violet, jumping eagerly up and down.

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said Carrie, quickly. "I'm afraid you couldn't grow white ever—I'm sure I don't know what you could do."

Violet gave a heavy sigh of disappointment. "Well, if I's allus black, I hopes I'll live with you, Miss Carrie."

"Yes, that you shall," replied the little girl.

"And," said Violet, "when we goes to Canaan, that old Sambo sings about, may I be your little slave *then*, Miss Carrie, 'cause you's allus so kind?"

"I don't think there will be any slaves there," said Carrie, slowly, pondering over the matter.

"Why, what will the black people do, then?" cried Violet, with curious round eyes.

"Maybe," replied Carrie hesitatingly, "maybe there won't *be* any black people—you know, Violet, our bodies are covered up in the ground,"—Violet shivered,—"but our souls go to heaven, and they must be all white."

"*All* of 'em?" asked Violet, eagerly.

"Yes, mamma told me that no soul can go till it is washed *white* in Jesus' blood."

"And can *my* soul be white?" whispered Violet.

"Yes," said Carrie, "if you ask God."

"Please ask him now," cried Violet, eagerly, "here under the tree, please, oh, Miss Carrie!"

And in the soft twilight the little girls knelt down, while Carrie prayed,—

"O God, help Violet to be very good, and make her soul white, for Jesus' sake."

And Violet echoed,— "Please, dear Jesus, make Violet's soul *white*."

They remained a few minutes in silence and then rose from their knees.

"Is my soul white *now*, Miss Carrie?"

"I suppose it must be," replied Carrie, with sweet, childish faith.

Violet looked at her dusky, bare hands, arms and feet with a new interest. "Can He look through all the black, Miss Carrie, and see my new white soul?"

"Ah yes; he sees every thing. But, Violet, mamma says, if we do wrong, it makes a black spot, and God will look away"—

"Oh, I loves him, I loves him, Miss Carrie; he's *so* good to me—to make my soul white, and I *will* try"—

"Carrie," interrupted Frank's quick, angry voice, "mamma wants you directly."

Poor Violet rolled hastily over the fence

like a little black ball, and Carrie ran into the house.

The next morning Frank awoke feeling very unamiable, and determined to make Carrie and Violet as uncomfortable as himself. He soon thought of a plan. After making some request which was answered in the affirmative by his absent-minded father, he set off for the house of the overseer.

"Papa says," he began, "that Violet is to work with the rest of the children to-day."

"She is too young yet to work all day," said the overseer. "No matter," said Frank, "papa says she *must go*." There was nothing more to be said; and Violet was sent with a gang of children, hired from several plantations, to help carry brick for the building of a house. Some one had discovered that these quick little black children could be made very useful. They were formed in a line, and as they passed the pile of building material, one brick was laid on each curly head, and with that they climbed the ladder, left the scaffolding, and came regularly around to the starting point,* looking like a busy little colony of ants. At first Violet thought

* A fact.

it great fun, and went nimbly up the ladder with her head very proud and erect. But as the day wore on, the busy limbs grew tired, the bricks pressed heavier on her aching head, she could hardly see how to stumble up the ladder, and at last, when mischievous Dick, just behind her, gave her a sudden pinch, she fell from top to bottom. Poor little Violet was much bruised, but she could not rest long, for the overseer called her name, and told her "not to be lazy." So she went slowly on as if in a dream, toiling painfully over the weary way. Several times, when she thought of Master Frank, angry feelings would arise in her heart. Then she would think of the spots on her new white soul, and she would ask God to forgive her and help her to feel right. At last the evening came, and Violet crept slowly home. As she neared the house, Carrie ran to meet her.

"Poor little Violet," she cried, "are you so tired? It was all a mistake; papa didn't mean to have *you* go, and you shan't any more. I shall ask papa to give you all to me."

"Please do, Miss Carrie," sighed Violet.

"Well, I will this very night, and Frank will not treat you so badly any more."

"Miss Carrie, oh Miss Carrie," cried Violet in a choking voice, pointing to a tree a short distance from them.

"Yes," said Carrie, quietly. "I knew Frank was there all the time, but he's sound asleep over his book, and don't hear a word we say." But Violet's terrors increased, and she shook from head to foot, still keeping her finger rigidly stretched out.

Carrie looked more earnestly, and in the deep shadow she saw the glittering eyes and brilliant crest of a poisonous snake, close, oh *so close* to Frank. There, *there* he was, gathering himself up to strike her sleeping brother! A piercing shriek burst from Carrie's pale lips; but Violet, forgetful of her aching limbs and her past suffering, sprang forward frantically, and threw herself upon her young tormentor. "Mass'r Frank — Mass'r Frank!" she called loudly, and then could say no more, for the fatal spring was taken, and the poison sheathed in her quivering dark arm.

Frank started with the cry of agony, only to see his fearful enemy glide swiftly away in the gloom. The shrieks of the children brought the household speedily to the spot,

but the poison had done rapid work in the weary little body.

"Please, Jesus, give Violet a white soul," murmured the child, lifting her dim eyes to the sweet evening sky. Then came a quick convulsion, followed by a long shiver throughout the rounded limbs, and little Violet was quite still.

Frank shuddered violently as he thought of the terrible fate he had escaped, and his heart was full of remorse as he remembered his cruelty to the patient, forgiving little slave, who had been so much more noble than he. His father, with a heart full of thanksgiving for the life of his only son, looked tearfully upon the motionless little form, and said, tenderly, — "Poor little black Violet!" And Carrie, sobbing bitterly, forgetful of the new white soul, echoed, — "Poor little black Violet!" But no one knew what the angels said.

XX.

WHAT IT COST.

It was certainly the fifth time that little Fifine, in her white wrapper, and with dainty bare feet, had crept down the broad stair case, and listened, tearful and half-frightened, at the dining-room door. It was almost midnight, but she hadn't slept a wink. How could she, when every three minutes would come a roar of laughter and stamping of feet that almost shook the house, and made the poor little heart beat faster than ever? But now she was growing desperate, and *must* speak to Louis, if it were only one word. She knocked at the door, but the sound was drowned in a rude peal of laughter.

"So you think the old 'Governor' will never be any the wiser?" cried a voice.

"Oh, he'll never find it out. John is true as steel, and the children are all abed except Eugene, and *he'll* never tell, I know."

"Give me some more champagne then, and

"I won't," cried a fair-haired little boy of about ten years.

"I don't know about that, Dumpling; I think you've had enough. Just remember you are five or six years younger than the rest of us, and are not used to it at all."

"Then I *will* tell father,—see if I don't," whimpered Eugene.

"What a plague! Well, come now, hold your glass—it's the last time, remember," cried Louis. "I say, boys, I made quite a good bargain over this champagne. The Governor didn't leave me a very liberal supply of funds, this time, but I knew we couldn't get along with only that old currant wine in the cellar, and by great good luck I managed to get some of the genuine article dirt cheap. You'd never guess how little I gave for it." (Alas! it was not paid for, as my story will show.) "Here, Phil, let me give you a drop more."

"Louis!" cried a shaking little voice, "Louis!"

"What's that?" cried the boy, starting. "Refine, I do declare!" and he made two steps for the door.

"What on earth do you want here at this

time of night?" said he, a little angrily. "I thought you were sound asleep in your bed."

"I couldn't sleep," faltered Fifine, "there is such a dreadful noise. And, Louis, I have come to ask you to send all these wild boys home. You know father don't like to have you go with them, and mother—Oh! what would she say if"—

"Come, come, Fifine, go back to bed, that's a darling. They'll all go pretty soon, I'll promise you, and father and mother will never know unless *you* turn magpie; and I know," added he, coaxingly, "you won't want to make so much trouble. Come, now, if you'll go back to bed and forget all about it, I'll give you the prettiest present to-morrow"—

"But you've spent all your money on those horrid bottles," said Fifine.

"Pshaw, Goosey! you haven't the least idea how cheap they were. It was a bargain, you see, and they hardly cost any thing at all."

"But I'm almost sure it isn't right," sobbed Fifine; "and you've got poor Eugene in there too, and his cheeks look so red I'm afraid he'll have a fever and die before father and mother come back."

"I declare," cried Louis, impatiently, "one girl is more trouble than a dozen boys. Now I *must* go back to my company, and if Goosey won't go up to her nice warm bed, why, I must carry her myself;" and Louis lifted the slight figure.

Fifine made no resistance, but only sobbed quietly to herself till he put her down gently upon the soft carpet of her own little room.

"Oh, Louis," she cried, as he sprang back through the door. "One thing more I want to say,—when you go down, please take that candle out of the window."

"What candle?"

"Why, some one has set a candle right in the window, and the curtains will blow against it in the wind, and"—

"Ah, yes! what a thoughtful little puss it is! Yes; I'll see to it. We want it there a little while so John can see to pound ice on the piazza, but there isn't the least bit of danger while we're all sitting there, you know. Indeed, we think some of illuminating the front windows so they shall look like the palace of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, and then we'll finish the night in the garden."

"Oh, Louis," sobbed Fifine, "you said they should go soon."

"Well! well! so they shall. Now, good-night. You'll find it all right in the morning. Say, 'Now I lay me,' and go to sleep like a dear little bird;" and again kissing her, he hastily left the room.

Poor little Fifine could not go to bed, but curling herself up in a great easy-chair with her small feet lost in a silk cushion, she cried a little more, listened, sobbed again, and finally, being very tired, dropped off to sleep. Twelve! one! two! three! and still she slept on; but now her dream began to be very troubled. She thought she was again at the dining-room door, and the claps and hisses were louder than ever. Then the rough boy, Phil Barnard, saw her, and was so angry that he flew at her and tried to strangle her.

Fifine awoke coughing and choking, and, rubbing her eyes, looked around her. She soon became conscious that Snarler was whining piteously — the air was thick, heavy and almost stifling; and what was that strange noise? Crackle, crackle, sputter, crackle, — what could it be?

Fifine arose, her limbs trembling and teeth

chattering, and crept to the hall door. As she opened it the sound grew more frightful, and a thick volume of smoke rushed into the room.

“Louis! Eugene!” she cried; but no voice replied, and she hastily ran down the stairs. Ah! it was all explained now. What a frightful sight! The dining-room — its tables covered with broken dishes — Louis lying on the lounge in a heavy sleep — little Eugene curled up on the floor, motionless, and with his eyes half open as if he were already dead — Phil Barnard, the only one of the wild company who had not gone home, staring about him in stupid wonder, while all the sad scene was terribly illuminated by tongues of vivid fire, that were leaping and chasing each other up the casement, and over the frescoed wall. A shriek of terror burst from Fifine’s pale lips, but Phil only turned his blank wondering gaze upon her, and Louis and Eugene slept on.

“Fire! fire!” shrieked poor Fifine, but no one seemed to hear. She was desperate, and rushed to the servants’ room. On her way she stumbled over John, lying full length upon the floor in the servants’ hall, but he,

too, was stupid, and could not be roused. But now came the black cook, Dinah, rolling her great eyes in fright, and here was nurse, wringing her hands, with her cap fallen off her head.

“Fire! fire!” screamed Fifine; “and *hurry*, or Louis and Eugene will be burnt to death!”

Then the poor frightened women ran to and fro. Nurse poured a pail of cold water over the stupid John, and roused him enough to send him to the neighbors for help. Great strong Dinah, almost stifled with smoke, dragged Louis and Eugene out of the flames, while Phil just knew enough to stupidly follow.

And now the fire had gained grand headway. It was sweeping through the beautiful parlors, reveling among the rare paintings, darting its hungry red tongue among the costly books, the vases and the statues, and now it made a grand leap to the staircase, and wreathed the carven balusters with crimson, while Fifine and the servants stood stupefied with terror. Eugene lay senseless upon the grass, and Louis, but partially roused, one minute laughed wildly, and the next cried and sobbed like a baby.

Suddenly little Fifine, giving a quick startled glance, cried, — “Where is *baby*? Has no one brought out little Lucie?”

Nurse looked aghast — ran to the hall door, and again rushed back stifled with smoke.

“May Heaven forgive me!” cried the half crazy woman. “The stairs are all on fire, and Lucie is in the nursery!”

Louis started a little, took a few tottering steps, and sank again, while the fearful fire blazed and crackled, and waved its red banners as if in defiance. Old Dinah threw herself upon the ground with loud groans, while nurse wrung her hands and cried, — “Oh! my darling! Oh! my poor little lamb!”

Fifine looked despairingly at the helpless group, and then, with white lips, sprang to the trellis upon which vines were trained to droop over the piazza. Up, up, went the eager bare feet — up! she had reached the roof, and crawled in the nursery window. There sat innocent baby Lucie, upright in her crib, clapping her hands and crowing at the strange rosy light. Poor baby! she was too young to go to heaven by such a gate of fire, and Fifine clasped her convulsively.

The floor was already hot to the little bare feet, but Ffine came bravely out with her precious burden. A great cheer awaited her as she appeared on the roof, for the neighbors had come, and the engine from the village half a mile off.

So they put up a ladder, and Ffine and Lucie came down riding royally upon kind Mr. Barnard's broad shoulders.

"Dear Mr. Barnard," whispered Ffine suddenly, on the way down, "will you please help me get out Dicky and the parrot? How *could* I forget them?"

"Where are they, little daughter?"

"In the library."

They flew to the window. Ah! too late! Dicky already lay upon the bottom of his cage, his poor little claws in the air, and Jacko, with shrill cries, was beating his wires, almost hidden in a fiery rain.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the poor bird, when he saw Ffine. "How d'y do; I'm scared! I'm scared!"

"Oh, Mr. Barnard, get him quick," screamed Ffine, clasping her hands.

"It is too late," said he, kindly; "I can not

save Jacko now. The floor may fall in any minute."

A heart-broken sob burst from Fifine's lips — the poor parrot ruffled his golden green feathers, cried feebly, "I'm scared! I'm scared!" — the side of the room tottered, there was a grand crash, and all was over with Jacko.

Morning dawned cloudy and chilly. The beautiful house stood a blackened ruin — the fine garden was destroyed — the trees scorched and dead, the flowers buried in a rain of cinders, — a few chairs and tables scattered around in hopeless confusion — Eugene, with fevered cheeks and glassy eyes, lying on a bed in the grass, and Louis, now come to his senses, standing in the midst with a look of hopeless despair.

"How *could* this have taken fire?" asked Mr. Barnard.

Louis shook his head mournfully.

Fifine crept up slowly with her little blistered feet, and whispered, "Did you move the candle?"

"Yes — no — yes, I think I did," faltered the miserable Louis, "but I can't quite re-

member;" and he put his hand to his throbbing head.

"Ah, Louis," wept little Fifine, "how much have you paid for those bottles of champagne?"

X X I.

CHRISTIE BELL'S STOCKINGS.

"Yes, them ruffles and little dresses look very nice," said the big, fat cook, emptying Christie's basket; "but you needn't wait for the money to-night, 'cos Mrs. Baker's powerful busy seein' to a Christmas tree, and you needn't come to-morrow nuther, for there's goin' to be a heap of company then; but the day after mebbe you'll get attended to. Now run home," said she, not unkindly, "and here's a cake chuck full of caraways for you."

"Now move on lively," cried the pert little errand-boy to hesitating Christie. "Don't you see the cook is terribly flustered with all these chickens and turkeys? She's getting quite wild. Ten chances to one if she don't make some dreadful mistake, and in two minutes have you covered up in that big chicken pie! Scatter now!" and by way of enforcing his remarks, he made a dash at her with such a murderous-looking skewer that poor Chris

tie's feet clattered like a pair of very lively castanets, out into the street.

"Dear me!" said Christie, catching her breath, as she turned the corner. "What a very sad thing it is to be poor. Now we won't have any dinner to-morrow, unless it is one of those old puddings all Indian meal and water, with a little molasses on top. I am so tired of it!" and again she sighed heavily. "I wonder how that cake tastes?" thought Christie in another minute, brightening a little. "Mother and I will eat it together. How nice it will be! but I believe I *must* take one little bite now;" and it was just inserted between Christie's little pearls of teeth, which seemed to fairly shine with the unexpected pleasure of scraping such an agreeable acquaintance, when a weak voice close by her side uttered a plaintive cry.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Joey?" said Christie, uneasily drawing the cake under her shawl.

Poor little hunchback Joey made no reply except by stretching out his thin hands, and fixing his great hungry eyes upon that spot of the shawl where the precious cake had disappeared.

The look was too much for Christie's generous heart.

"Are you very hungry, poor Joey?" she said, with a sigh.

"Oh, *very!*" said Joey, bursting into tears

"Take it, then," said Christie, drawing out the precious morsel with a nervous little hand, and without venturing a look behind her, she hurried on her way.

"Hurrah!" cried a cheery voice, suddenly beside her, —

"The darling little Christie Bell,
Whom the angels love so well!
How comes she in the street so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?"

"Oh, Mr. Charley, is it you?" cried Christie, joyfully. "Are you home for Christmas?"

"It is just *I*," responded a merry-eyed six-footer of the venerable age of eighteen. "And how are the stockings — finished? Was there yarn enough? Just half a yard from heel to toe, and legs as long as a lightning rod!"

"Finished!" cried Christie Bell, triumphantly clapping her hands; "and big enough for the giant that lives at the top of Jack's bean-pole."

"Just the size!" cried Mr. Charley. "They'll be a splendid fit! and I suppose

they're an elegant shape, and not a mistake in them."

"No, Mr. Charley," said Christie, bravely, after a moment of conscientious struggle, "I'm afraid — well, there's three stitches dropped, and I seamed four times in the wrong place, and maybe the ankles are a little too fat, and "—

"Hush! I won't hear another word against 'em. I know they're beauties, and I think of keeping 'em under a glass case."

"Well, you must remember your promise, Mr. Charley," said the pleased Christie.

"Oh, yes — enough more yarn to knit six pairs for the poor soldiers? Yes; I'll give you enough for the whole army, if you'll knit it up."

"Oh, that's splendid!" cried Christie, not at all dismayed by the prospect; "I'll do it."

"But what have you got on your own little feet?" said Mr. Charley, suddenly looking down at the worn shoes and thin old cotton stockings.

"Oh," said Christie, blushing very much, "they're nice enough for me."

"But your feet will freeze."

"Oh no; I don't think about them at all. They're warm, — I guess."

"Well, what *do* you think about, little snow-bird?" said Mr. Charley, curiously.

"Oh, to-night I have lovely thoughts. It's the night before Christmas, you know, and I never saw any thing so splendid as the shop windows. Do you know," said Christie, confidentially, "when I see a very grand one a good ways off, I just shut my eyes tight till I'm right in front, and then I say, 'Open sesame,' and make believe I've walked right into Aladdin's garden. Oh, its great fun, Mr. Charley; did you ever try it?"

"Why, no. How stupid I've been! I never thought of it."

"Well, you can try it to-night," said Christie, patronizingly, as she stooped to pick up some sprays of evergreen, — poor little branches that some heavy foot had trampled. Christie kissed them, and they thanked her with their sweet odorous breath.

"What are you going to do with those, Christie?" Christie hesitated.

"You will never tell?" said she, grasping his big hand nervously.

"No! Honor!" cried Mr. Charley, bending down his handsome head.

"Well, you know that little place with a fence all 'round, down Pine Street?"

"You don't mean the place where they used to bury people fifty years ago?" said Charley, with an affected shudder.

"Yes I do," said Christie, hurriedly; "and there's little children buried there too, for I've been in and measured, and you can't think how sad it looked to-day, with the cold snow, all heaps—up and down—up and down—just exactly as if the ground was sobbing about it, you know, and I thought I would like to put these pretty branches on some of the poor little graves."

"You dear, odd little Christie!" cried Charlie, giving the astonished child a sudden toss in the air, basket and all. "I thought little girls' heads were only full of dolls and baby-houses, on Christmas Eve."

Just then they came out into the brilliant square laughing all over with gas-lights, where their paths began to diverge.

"You won't forget to come for the stockings to-morrow?"

"No indeed! You may expect to see the toes of my big feet coming in at the door about nine o'clock, and the rest of me will be along in fifteen minutes after."

Christie laughed merrily, and hastened on past the handsome houses, where, through parted curtains, she caught glimpses of pictures and flowers, and wonderful Christmas trees, till she quite forgot that she was cold and hungry, and walked on like a princess, hand in hand with fairies and genii.

Then the bells began to ring for Christmas Eve, and the fairies and genii all fled away, while Christie thought of something far sweeter and better—thought of the tidings of great joy—of the dear Saviour who was born a little babe in the manger; and she wished she had been the happy star who had nothing to do but point it out with his long finger of light. Dear, beautiful Saviour, who remembered that he was a baby once, and said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me.”

Christie’s steps mechanically turned into the dark street leading home.

“Hallo, boys! Here’s a lark!” cried Jim Brown, catching sight of her thin, scantily draped little figure. “If here isn’t a broom-handle out all alone by itself, with clothes hung on it, making believe it’s a girl!”

“Yes,” cried another, giving her big basket

a twirl, "it's a broom-handle and a clothes-basket out on a spree together! But I do say it's the basket's turn to carry the broom-handle. I'm sure it's the biggest. Let's make 'em turn about;" and he proceeded to induct Christie's feet under the cover.

"Please," cried bewildered Christie, "it isn't a broom-handle, it's Christie Bell."

"Oh! you're trying to throw dust in our eyes. It's a way brooms have," cried Jim Brown. "Now hurry in, or I'll have to break you in two pieces, for in you must go."

"For shame!" cried the rest of the boys, as Christie burst into tears. "It's real mean to plague little Kriss Bell;" and with a sudden change of intention they insisted on escorting her home in a body.

"Are you going to hang up your stockings?" asked one.

"It wouldn't do any good," said Christie, mournfully.

"Why, haven't you heard the news? Santa Claus has just returned from the mountains of the moon, and has brought such a big bag of presents that he can't squeeze down chimneys any more, and he's just coming 'round to outside doors, and any one who wants any

thing will just hang his stocking out, and it'll be crammed!"

"You're making fun of me. There isn't any Santa Claus," said Christie, anxiously.

"Well," said the mischievous boys, "we're all going to try it, any way, — every boy and girl in the row, unless it's you."

Poor simple Christie entered the house in a perfect maze. Could it be true? She didn't suppose there would be any harm in trying, and she wouldn't say one word to mother, so it should be a pleasant surprise to her in the morning. But what stockings *should* she hang out? Her own were so miserable, and full of darns, that she couldn't think of exposing them on the front door. Could it possibly hurt those splendid ones she had knit for Mr. Charley? They would be so nice and strong, and would hold so much. Besides, they *couldn't* be hurt. Didn't Mrs. Malone tell mother that the gates of heaven were always wide open on Christmas Eve, and wouldn't there be more good angels in the air than on any other night? So Christie carefully hung out her precious stockings, and went soundly to sleep. The spirit who makes dreams for good children had one waiting

for *her*, — all dolls, and candies, and flowers and angels — the very nicest little girl-dream, he had mixed that night.

Morning came, and with dimples, and roses and hasty bare feet, Christie stole to the outside door. One minute — and with wide, incredulous eyes and quivering lips, she was stealing back again, holding in her hands — oh! direful sight! — the precious stockings, with their poor feet cut sheer off their legs, and nothing in them but a few sticks and cold pancakes! Was there ever any thing so cruel? And where were the good angels all the time?

There is no use in trying to tell all Christie's broken-hearted grief, nor how her poor mother tried to console her, and cried harder than Christie's self, nor how, after Christie's mother had gone to Mrs. Baker's to make one more attempt to get a little money for Christmas, hateful Jim Brown came to the window and cried, — "Hi, Christie Bell! what did you get in your stockings? Oh, do come and look at Christie Bell's new stockings!"

All this was very hard, but hardest of all was when "Mr. Charley" came springing in.

"Hurrah! you small Christiana! Here's Great-Heart after his stockings!"

Christie burst into fresh tears.

"Not quite done yet? Never mind. Next Christmas will do just as well;" but here his quick eyes caught a glimpse of blue yarn, and the remains of the beautiful stockings were dragged from Christie's unwilling apron.

"How's this?" cried Mr. Charley, bursting into a merry laugh. Christie sobbed her story.

"Downright mean!" said he, vehemently, brushing his own eyes. "But as to the stockings, I like them just as well this way as any other — they'll be so handy to put on!"

"Oh, Mr. Charley, they'll never be of any use *so*."

"Oh well, then, I'll mend 'em with *Spalding*. Spalding will mend any thing in the world!"

"Will it *really, truly* mend these?" cried Christie, with a brightening face.

"Well, it always mended any thing I ever tried yet," said Mr. Charlie, evasively; "and now you mustn't think the good angels were off guard either, last night. I suppose you never thought of looking under the stoop?"

"No," said Christie, wonderingly.

"Then you didn't see these. Santa Claus remembered the little girl that gave away her cake;" and he brought out two of the prettiest pairs of white stockings, with red tops, stuffed just as full as they could be—stuffed with cakes and candies, and books and dolls, and mittens and shoes, and a little pocket-book, with a whole dollar in five and three-cent pieces! Then on the floor, though they certainly never came out of the stockings, lay two nice fat chickens, and a beautiful Christmas pie.

"Hi, Christie," cried Jim Brown's hateful voice again at the window, "what did you get in your stocking? Come see Christie Bell's beautiful new"—but here his eye fell on the floor, scattered with presents, and he stopped short in envious surprise.

"Yes," cried Christie Bell, clapping her hands, and laughing and sobbing all at once, "yes, *do* come and see Christie Bell's beautiful new stockings!"

XXII.

LITTLE CLARE.

THE wintry wind blows wild and chill,
The snow drifts fast and faster still
 Through all the troubled air;
But careless of the raging storm,
And laughing at all thought of harm,
In snowy ermine nestled warm,
 Trips merry little Clare.

The wind her bonnet-strings unties,
The snow-flakes fringe her lovely eyes,
 And wreath her soft brown hair;
But troops of happy thoughts delight
Her bounding heart, as, warm and tight,
She clasps a silver dollar bright,
 A birthday gift to Clare.

"How nice," she cries, with sparkling eye,
"What lovely playthings I can buy,—
 That big doll in her chair,

Perhaps a set of cups for tea, —
Ah, there's the window, only see,
As full of toys as it can be!

What *shall* I take?" thought Clare.

But while she stood in pleasing doubt,
A soft sigh made her turn about;
And there, with feet all bare,
She saw a little half-clad child,
His hollow eyes with hunger wild;
"I wonder if he ever smiled,"
Thought tearful little Clare.

"Where is your home, poor boy?" she cried,
"And why has not your mother tried
To make you clothes to wear?"
"Alas! alas!" the boy replies,
"My mother sick and dying lies,
And hungry baby cries and cries."
"Dear me!" sighed little Clare.

"And do you live quite far from here?"
"No," cried the boy, "'tis very near;
Oh, may I show you where?"
With eager steps he ran before,
Till, slipping through a battered door,
He guided o'er a broken floor
The dear, small feet of Clare.

They pause within a dingy room,
 And, peering through the chilly gloom,
 She sees reclining there
 A weary woman, ghastly pale,
 Who tries, in pauses of the gale,
 To hush a starving baby's wail.

 "'Tis *very* sad," wept Clare.

"Poor thing! she has no fire nor food;
 I wonder if I only could

 My bright new dollar spare."

So lovely then the young face grew,
 Through such sweet mist smiled eyes of blue;
 What heaven-born thought was shining thro',
 Oh, tender heart of Clare?

"Poor woman, take this coin," she said,
 And in that shriveled palm was laid
 The child-hand soft and fair.

Oh, what strange joy those features wore,
 What eager thanks those lips outpour.

"God bless you, darling, evermore!"

 "How *very* sweet," thought Clare.

As homeward Clare's quick footsteps pressed,
 No waxen doll lay on her breast, —
 But ah! what peace was there.

And as with rev'rent tenderness
The wind swept back each loosened tress,
With what a heavenly loveliness
 Had God blessed little Clare!

XXIII.

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR OF HEAVEN.

A TRUE STORY.

THE glowing sun of a midsummer afternoon poured through the curtainless windows of the little village school, and small curly heads drooped like delicate flowers in the languid air. Among them all, little Katie's sunny ringlets fell the lowest, and if you had lifted the golden veil, you would have seen that the weary eyes had forgotten to con the long line of hard words in the worn spelling-book, and that the silken fringes of the drooping lids were pillowed upon the sweetest little cheeks in the world. Yes, in the heated air, soothed by the lazy drone of the flies and the restless hum of young student voices, Katie had fallen asleep.

She was dreaming too — dreaming of the little brother, darling Charley, who, in the bright spring-time, — when the violets were just opening their sweet blue eyes, — had

strayed away from earth, and passed through those gates of glory, always open for the entering of little feet. And she dreamed that she clasped him to her little lonely heart, and begged him never to leave her again. And in the greatness of her joy she sobbed aloud, and started to find Belle's soft arm around her, as she whispered, —

“What is the matter, Katie?”

But before poor Katie could well collect her thoughts to answer, school was dismissed, and she heard the teacher exclaim, as he pointed to the darkening west, “Hurry home, children, or you will be caught in the shower.”

But Katie could not hurry, and as she walked slowly out of the door, again little Belle's sweet voice cried, “Poor Katie, are you sick?”

Then Katie poured all her troubles into the sympathizing ear of her little friend, and finished saying, “I could not bear to find it only a dream. I feel as if I *must* see Charley once more.”

“Where do you think he is?” asked Belle.

“In heaven, I know,” replied Katie, “and mother says he can not come back to *us*, but

we can go to *him*, some time ;” and her sobs broke out afresh.

“Why don’t you go to him *now*?” cried Belle.

“I don’t know the way,” said Katie. “I was very sick when they took him away in that dreadful little box, and I don’t know where they went.”

“Are you sure they went to *heaven*?” said Belle, eagerly.

“Oh, I *know* it,” said Katie.

“Then,” said delighted little Belle,—“then I can show you the way. *I* saw where they put your little brother!” The glad light in Katie’s tearful eyes was beautiful to behold.

“Will you, *will* you show me, Belle, *now*, this very afternoon?”

“Yes, indeed,” cried Belle; and with clasped hands, unmindful of the gathering gloom, these little pilgrims set forth on their journey to heaven.

Once, on the way, a doubt oppressed Belle—

“Are you sure, Katie, that you can get in?”

“Ah!” said Katie, with sweet assurance, “how Charley *would* run to open the door!” and her cheek flushed with anticipation.

"Do you suppose he is very happy?" urged Belle.

"*Very*," said Katie, emphatically.

"And what does he do all the time?"

"Plays with the angels with such lovely wings," cried Katie, with great animation.

"And then you know they can play with the stars, for they must lie thick all over the floor of heaven. And then there are the rainbows. I suppose they keep them up all the year around, and oh! how Charley used to love rainbows. He cried once because"—

"Dear me!" cried Belle, interrupting her in great dismay,—"it rains, Katie, and we are ever so far from home; what *shall* we do?"

"But we are almost to heaven, aren't we? Let's hurry and go in there."

"Yes," said Belle, "I see the door."

"Where? Where?" cried Katie, breathlessly.

"There," responded little Belle, pointing to the rising ground and iron door of the village vault.

"Oh!" fluttered Katie, with intense disappointment. "Is *that* heaven? Oh, Belle! it is like a great grave!" and her lip quivered sadly

"Why," said Belle, "that is where they took your brother, the very place, and you said he had gone to heaven. Maybe," she added, with a brightening face, — "maybe, when we get through the little dark door, it will all be very bright and beautiful on the other side."

"Perhaps it is," said Katie, more hopefully.

But now the large drops began to fall very fast, and a thunder storm in all its sublimity burst upon the little travelers. The burdened west gleamed like an ocean of flame, and the floor of heaven resounded to the solemn tread of the mighty thunder. Still these little children, with clasped hands and pale lips, pressed on, and their angels, who "do always behold the face of our Father," watched over them lovingly, and they walked secure in the heavenly company.

At last the pattering feet reached the gloomy entrance, and Katie's sweet, hopeful lips were pressed close to the cold door.

"Knock!" cried Belle; and with all her strength Katie did knock, and a hollow echo was all her reply, while the little brother, with folded eyes, and pale, clasped hands, heeded not the imploring cry, —

"Charley, dear Charley, it is your sister, your own sister Katie; won't you open the door?"

"He can not hear while it thunders so," said Belle. "Let us wait a little while;" and they waited.

Soon there was a lull in the storm, and again Katie, strong in faith, knocked at the dreary door, and her yearning cry, — "Charley, *dear* Charley!" echoed sadly back.

"Do you hear any thing?" asked Belle, with parted lips. "Is he coming?"

"No," replied Katie. "I thought once I heard his little shoes, but" —

"Perhaps," suggested Belle, with large imaginative eyes, "perhaps he is playing with the angels, a great way off, in a most beautiful garden."

"Oh," sobbed Katie, "I hope he will not love the little angels more than me."

"Knock once more, — just *once*," urged Belle. With wavering faith again the little soft hand plead for entrance, and a tremulous voice cried piteously, —

"Charley, dear, sweet, *darling* little brother, please open the door to your own poor Katie. Don't love the little angels better than me.

Oh, Charley! Charley!" She threw herself upon the wet ground in an agony of grief and disappointment.

"Katie," said Belle, half frightened at this outburst, "let us go home now, and come again to-morrow and try."

"No," said Katie, with touching hopelessness, "I shall never come again. Let us go." She rose without another sob, or fresh tear even upon the wet cheek, but the grieved expression of the sweet, childish mouth was pitiful to behold.

Back over all the dreary way went Katie and Belle. Little shoes wet—little dresses dripping—little heads bent like dew-laden flowers—little hearts very heavy.

At Katie's door stood her anxious mother, peering through the shadows for her darling. The child sprang to those loving arms, and with one cry, that spoke all the agony of bitter doubt that had crept into her young, confiding heart, exclaimed, —

"Oh, mother, I have been knocking at the door of heaven, and Charley would not let me in!" *

Dear, grieved little Katie, refusing to be

* The identical words of the child.

comforted in this great sorrow! It may be that before the violets come again "God's hand may beckon unawares," and with a better guide thou shalt indeed find the "door of Heaven." Then knock, little pilgrim, and thou shalt be heard amid the hallelujahs of all the heavenly choirs. Back shall roll the blessed portals, and Charley shall lead thee with eager wings to the feet of Him who loves little children, while the song of the angels shall be, — "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

XXIV.

"SEVEN TIMES."

It was a lovely spring morning, — early in the season, but undeniably spring, for the frogs had held a croaking, sputtering caucus the night before, and, though the winter frost did not seem quite thawed from their throats, had unanimously decided that the matter was quite beyond a doubt. Besides, a few courageous Puritan robins had made a Plymouth of the old elm-tree at the garden gate, and it didn't need any great proficiency in bird-language to know that their songs were full of roses, green leaves, and prosperity.

But we must not spend our time talking about the morning. Our business is with little Milly Pattison, sitting by the window, learning her morning verse, — little Milly, who felt very happy sitting in the sunshine, and was anxious to do something to please the good God who had made such a beautiful

world. So, as she learned her verse, — “And if thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying *I repent*, thou shalt forgive him,” — her gray eyes looked very thoughtful, and her small mouth grew firm with some very important resolution.

Pretty soon, down stairs she came to the dining-room, and found nobody there but brother Frank, who had two years the start of her in the race of life, but was not so far ahead as you might suppose. He was looking very discontented. “Real mean!” were the first words that jumped from his mouth, though you couldn’t have expected any thing better from such a pout. “Real mean to spend such a day as this in school!” and the book he held in his hand was transferred to his foot and sent spinning in the air, from whence it returned with a broken back and two fluttering leaves.

“Oh, Frank!” cried Milly, “isn’t that my arithmetic? and you know I was trying to keep it like a new book.”

“I declare it is,” said Frank, in a tone of real regret. “I thought it was mine; — I’m sorry; — won’t you forgive me?”

"Yes," said Milly, slowly, picking up the scattered leaves, and thinking of her verse. "Yes, I suppose so;" and under her breath she added, "*One.*"

Breakfast over, they started for school together. "Milly," cried Frank, suddenly, "here comes a big dog — tongue out, red eyes! Look out for hydrophobia!" Poor Milly ran forward in great terror, too frightened to see where she stepped. Down went one foot in a treacherous hole, and the rest of Milly came tumbling after. This was a serious mishap; for the skin was quite rubbed from one dimpled elbow, and, worst of all, one of the morocco shoes — bright as a mirror — had a great, white, unsightly graze. Milly burst into tears, not about the elbow, for she could bear pain like a hero, and she knew that Nature, with the help of that experienced old tailor, Time, would soon set in a patch so nicely joined that she could never find the seam; but the new *shoe*, that was hopeless.

"Oh, Frank! how could you?" cried Milly. "And the dog was only good old Cato, that wouldn't hurt a fly!"

"Why, Milly, I'm sure I never thought

you'd fall. I only meant to give you a nice little run. It's too bad you're hurt. I'm so sorry;—won't you forgive me?”

“Yes,” said Milly, swallowing a lump in her throat. “I'll try. *Two*,” she sighed, softly, to herself.

At school, Frank was still very aggravating, and Milly had great temptation to forget her verse. He borrowed her slate-pencil, and lost it, and once, when she went up to her class, his feet grew suddenly very long, and Milly, stumbling over them, fell, to her great mortification, amid the laughter of the school. But Frank was *so* sorry. How could he help his feet being so big? He tried very hard to keep them under the desk, but there was only room there for one. He was *so* sorry; and patient Milly had to forgive him. There were one or two other grievances in the morning which I haven't time to relate. We will pass on to the time when school was out, and Milly found, to her great dismay, that there had been a sudden change in the weather, and the rain was pouring in torrents. But chivalrous Frank borrowed an umbrell^e, and, tucking Milly's plump hand

under his arm, started off as valiant as Great heart.

"Look out!" cried Milly. "You swing the umbrella so, that half the time it drips on my head."

"A little water won't hurt you, will it?" cried careless Frank. But when they reached home, poor Milly found that the coloring-matter had run from the umbrella, and long, dingy streams disfigured the cherry lining of her pretty hood.

"Well, now, that *is* too bad," cried Frank, observing her blank look of dismay. "I declare, 'Dot,' I'd change caps in a minute with you, if you would like it."

Neat little Milly looked at Frank's battered thatching, and mournfully shook her head.

"Well, Milly, you know I didn't mean to. I'm sure you'd forgive me if you knew how sorry I felt."

"I do forgive you," said Milly, with an effort, and she counted something on her fingers. "*Seven*," said she to herself, with a great sigh of relief.

"What *have* you been counting all day, Milly?" asked Frank, curiously.

Milly did not answer; but, as she ran in to

dinner, a very self-satisfied smile was on her face, and she repeated to herself, "*Seven times*. Well, I hope God has been pleased, for it has been very hard; and I'm so glad it's over, for I don't think I could hold out any longer."

It rained so hard in the afternoon, that Milly and Frank were allowed to stay at home and study in the playroom.

"Oh dear," said Frank, with a yawn. "Before I begin this 'rule of three which puzzles me,' let's have one little tune out of that music-box Uncle Charley gave you."

Milly's eyes brightened. She could not resist the temptation, and, running from the room, she soon returned with the treasure. Carefully she put in the little golden key, and turned it with the greatest caution; but mischievous Frank slipped in a little wooden wedge in the delicate works, and when she paused and listened, with smiling lips, and head turned on one side, the wonderful box was mute.

"What is it?" cried she, turning quite pale.

"Oh," said Frank, magnificently, "don't be alarmed. I'm a great magician. Just let me put my finger in the box one second, and all will be right."

Milly entrusted it to him with trembling hands. In went Frank's confident fingers, but they pulled out the wedge a little too roughly. Snap! went some delicate spring; there was a dreary noise, as if the whole box were going to fly in pieces, and then all was still. Frank examined the box with a dismayed face. "Milly," said he, at length, with an effort, "it's broken — spoiled! Can you ever forgive me?"

"No!" said little Milly, stamping her foot and bursting into vehement tears. "I can't, and I needn't, either. It's the eighth time! My dear, darling music-box! You did it on purpose! You're very bad to me! I'll run right to your room, and tear your kite, and spoil every thing I can find!"

Poor, remorseful Frank offered no opposition, and across the hall she ran, with streaming eyes and burning cheeks, and stumbled right into Uncle Charley's arms.

"Hity tity! what's the matter now?" But before the words were out of his mouth, Milly was pouring forth her story.

Uncle Charley looked grave when she finished. "And so you think it is right to be angry now?"

"Yes," said little Milly, impetuously. "It is quite right. I've forgiven him *seven times*. This makes *eight*."

"But didn't you know," said Uncle Charley, "that there is another verse where Jesus tells Peter not only to forgive his brother *seven times*, but 'until *seventy times seven*?'"

"Seventy times seven!" cried Milly, looking quite bewildered. "Oh, I'm sorry I ever began. I shall have to give up trying to please God that way."

"I hope not," said Uncle Charley.

"But you don't know how hard it is to keep forgiving and forgiving," wept Milly.

"Yes, I think I do," said Uncle Charley, smiling. "And I shouldn't wonder if the disciples knew it, too," said he, half to himself, "when, as soon as the command was given, they cried, with one accord, 'Lord, increase our faith.' Yes, little Milly," he continued, aloud, "it certainly is hard, but we must always keep trying, and not count the times, either; for I think 'seventy times seven' means that we should *always* forgive."

"Oh, I can't do it," sobbed Milly, turning determinedly away from poor Frank, who stood in the doorway, the image of despair.

"I'll give you my new book of travels, Milly, and save all my money till I can buy you another box," cried Frank, in doleful tones. But Milly would not listen.

"Very well," said Uncle Charley, "I would advise you not to say 'Our Father' for a day or two."

"Why?" said Milly, in great surprise.

"Why, just think how very sad it would be to have to pray, — 'And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive *Frank* who has trespassed against us.'"

Milly's cheeks grew burning red. She hesitated a moment, and then crying, "I can't give up 'Our Father,'" she ran to the sorrowful figure in the door, threw her arms around his neck, and had a "good cry" on the left pocket of his brown roundabout.

Good-hearted, blundering Frank has grown much more tender and careful of his little sister since then; and as for *her*, if you should ask Frank, — "How often does Milly forgive now? — till *seven* times?" you would see his honest eyes fill with affectionate tears, as he answers, softly, — "Milly is too good to count, and *I* don't dare to; but I'm quite sure till '*seventy times seven.*'"

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